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MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN W. FOSTER.

Born June 15. 1780
Died January 10. 1843
aged 62y. 6m 25 days.

MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN W. FOSTER.

Born June 15. 1794
Died January 10. 1871
aged 76 yrs. 6 mo. 25 days.



Foster

IICM



MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN W. FOSTER.

Born June 15. 1799
Died January 10. 1861
aged 62y. 6m. 5 days.







W. H. Foster.

MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN W. ^{de la} FOSTER.

EDITED

BY ANDREW P. ^{Peabody} PEABODY. 1811-1892

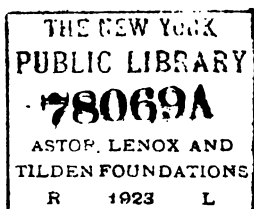
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MEMOIR.

MEMOIR.

REGINALD FOSTER, or FORSTER, whose family receives honorable mention in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" and in "Marmion," is believed to have been the common ancestor of all, or nearly all, who bear that name in New England. He became a citizen of Ipswich, Mass. in 1638. In the direct line of descent from him, James Foster, the father of the subject of this Memoir, was born at Ipswich in 1748. He arrived at maturity during the unsettled period of our revolutionary troubles; and, though endowed with valuable qualifications as a man of business, he was slow in finding permanent and remunerating employment. During a portion of the time, he was engaged in the labor of instruction. For several of the last years of his life, he was a clerk in the Massachusetts Bank. He married Elizabeth Hiller, and had nine children, eight of whom survived him. He died in 1793, leaving for his family little inheritance except an honored name and a revered memory. He was a man of superior intelligence, of the most amiable domestic traits, and of a serene and cheerful piety.

He was an intimate friend of the late Rev. Dr. Belknap, who, in a letter written on the occasion of his death, speaks of his "regular and exemplary life, formed on evangelical principles;" and adds: "To his integrity and benevolence there are as many witnesses as he had acquaintance, and no person can be more sincerely lamented." We have before us several of his letters, as well as other portions of the family correspondence, which all indicate a household not only deeply imbued with the faith of the gospel, but endowed with those finer graces and amenities which belong to the well-developed Christian character.

JOHN WELCH FOSTER, the youngest son of James Foster, was born June 16, 1789. At his father's death, he was consequently but four years of age. To relieve his sister of some portion of her charge and burden, his uncle, Joseph Hiller, then collector of the port of Salem, adopted him as a member of his family. Here he remained nine years, attending the best common schools, and for a portion of the time enjoying the tuition of Dr. Jacob Bigelow. In 1802, his uncle, having been removed from office by President Jefferson, connected himself with a bookselling firm in Boston. His nephew became his clerk, and so continued till the dissolution of the firm, when he was received for a short time, in the same capacity, into the employment of Prescott and Cleveland, dealers in English goods. Of the incidents of his boyhood we have been able to learn but little; yet that little leads us to believe, that the traits of his subsequent character already existed in

rich promise. Religious reverence, strict veracity and integrity, rigid conscientiousness, and undeviating fidelity to duty, were but the legitimate heritage of his father's example, and the fruit of his mother's prayers. Though treated with the utmost kindness by his uncle, he encountered enough of the privation and loneliness of an orphan's lot to cherish habits of self-dependence and sober thought, and to force his character to an earlier maturity than it might have attained in his native home.

In 1804, Mr. Foster's sister Elizabeth, who had married Amos Green, Esq. died; and her husband, who was a member of a firm in Havana, became a permanent resident of that city, and offered his brother-in-law a situation in his counting-room. He accepted the offer, embarked at Boston in December, 1805, and arrived at Havana after a tedious and perilous passage of thirty-two days. Here he remained for two years. He was a member of Mr. Green's family; was treated with great consideration, confidence, and kindness; and received intimations that a prolonged stay should be made to his pecuniary advantage. But many circumstances conspired to render his sojourn there sad and wearisome. He found it impossible to accustom himself to manners and habits so foreign from those of New England. He felt deeply the loss of his religious privileges. His mother, for whom he cherished the profoundest attachment and reverence, died during his absence. He had also two severe attacks of yellow fever, one of which brought him to the point of death, and left him with a constitution

ever after somewhat enfeebled. These illnesses he incurred in the discharge of the duties of humanity. He found many American seamen suffering from the fever, and destitute of the necessary attendance. He went freely among them, administered to them such relief as was in his power, and often filled for them the joint capacity of physician and nurse. His letters, during this period, evince a high tone of Christian manliness; and, equally in his treatment of business affairs, in his messages of sympathy and condolence under the bereaving hand of Providence, and in his modest expressions of high moral principle and assured religious faith, mark a mind developed far beyond his years, and a heart pervaded by the loftiest resolutions and the most generous affections.

18 On his return to Boston in December, 1807, he entered the counting-room of Mr. John Tappan, then a large importer of English goods. In April, 1808, he became a member of the Old South Church, under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Eckley, of whose paternal reception of him, as a religious inquirer, he ever retained the most grateful remembrance. He had been educated in the milder form of nominal Calvinism, which then prevailed in the New England churches; but had thought little of points of controversy, and had dwelt mainly on those fundamental truths which have an immediate connection with the duties of life and the culture of the spiritual affections. About this time, he became deeply interested in Worcester's "Bible News," then recently published. The views pre-

sented in this book led him to question the doctrine of the Trinity and its allied dogmas; and his inquiries resulted in his belief in the undivided personality of God, and his reception of Jesus as the first and noblest of created beings, made incarnate for the redemption and salvation of man. From this time onward, it was manifest to all who knew him, that religion held the foremost place in his thoughts and affections; that he regarded Christianity as that which he must not only live *by*, but live *for*, — as an end even more than a means.

In 1811, Mr. Tappan employed him as supercargo of a ship on a voyage from Baltimore to Lisbon. This voyage constituted the most eventful chapter of his life, and, in various ways, put to the test equally his endurance and forbearance, his mercantile skill and his fidelity to every interest in his trust, his courage and his disinterested kindness. He was on board the "Commodore Preble," a ship of 355 tons (a tonnage comparatively as large as eight hundred or a thousand tons would be at the present time), laden with corn and bread, and under the command of Capt. Joshua Atkins. The outward passage was tedious, but not dangerous. The vessel was twelve days in getting to sea, and fifty-nine days from port to port. The medicine-chest was entrusted to his care; and his services, as the ship's physician, were in almost daily demand, and were in every instance crowned with entire success. On his arrival at Lisbon, he found the market well stocked with provisions; and, through the carelessness and procrastination

of the merchant to whom he was consigned, he was compelled in great part to act as his own consignee. Under these disadvantages, he failed of so lucrative an operation as had been anticipated, yet was enabled to make a prompt, satisfactory, and remunerating disposal of his cargo. His homeward passage was full of hardship and peril. He sailed from Lisbon on Nov. 22. On approaching our winter-bound coast, the vessel experienced a series of gales and head-winds, which, together with the baffling currents on her track, rendered the captain uncertain of his reckoning, and made the approach to land in the utmost degree hazardous. On the evening of Jan. 16, 1812, the ship, being under full sail, in sight of land which was supposed to be a part of Long Island, suddenly struck ground, and, before her sails could be backed, was stranded on a small uninhabited island, near Nantucket. She stuck fast upon a beach, between a ledge of rocks and a huge sand-bank, on either of which she would have been immediately dashed in pieces. Finding that they were not in instant danger, the crew remained on board for the night. The following day was known for many years afterward as "the cold Saturday." Mr. Foster, in attempting an exploration of the island with the captain and mate, became severely frost-bitten, and escaped with no small danger of his life. They discovered no places of habitation, except a few deserted shooting-booths, and two huts with provision and firing erected and furnished by the Humane Society. Shortly after their return to the ship, they descried

a sail, which approached them on their hoisting a signal of distress. It was a pilot-boat from Martha's Vineyard. There being a strong probability of saving the ship, it was determined that the crew should remain on board, while Mr. Foster and the captain availed themselves of this means of transportation to the Vineyard in order to procure men and apparatus. On approaching the port which the boat had left in the morning, they found the ice so thick that they could not come within two miles of land, and were compelled to remain in the boat till the next morning, when they drew it over the ice to an inner pass which the rapidity of the tide had kept open. After several days' detention at Old Town, on account of the severity of the weather, Mr. Foster succeeded in reaching Boston on the evening of January 27. No lives were lost; and he had taken with himself the bag of gold which constituted the proceeds of the voyage, clinging to it as a trust, with a tenacity which, had it been his own property, cold and weariness would no doubt have relaxed. The ship bilged before the weather had moderated sufficiently for assistance to reach her, and was completely broken up in the course of a few days.

During this voyage, Mr. Foster kept a journal, which still remains entire. It bears ample testimony to his orderly and systematic industry, his tender regard for the rights and feelings of others, his unfaltering allegiance to conscience, and a no less sacred reverence for the restraints and obligations of religion on shipboard and abroad than

among the friends with whom he had been wont to "go to the house of God in company." Copious extracts from this journal we should be glad to make, were not the portions which would be of general interest too closely intermingled with the affairs of the ship and the voyage to admit of easy separation. The following passages will suffice to exhibit the tone of deep religious feeling which pervades the whole record:—

"SUNDAY, Sept. 29. — This is the seventh sabbath that I have been absent from public worship; yet I have cause to rejoice in innumerable instances of the kindness of my Maker, that ought to give double zeal to my gratitude and service. My fears have been disappointed, my hopes have been many times answered; and shall we receive good from the hand of the Lord as a thing of course, and yet repine at the least appearance of evil? Some of my hopes have been disappointed, and my wishes have been denied; but I may even here see cause to rejoice at this denial. We complain at our long passage, our many delays; while we cannot tell that it may not be greatly to our advantage. I will put my trust in God, and wait patiently for the accomplishment of his purposes. The delightful anticipation of that happy time when all mysteries shall be cleared up, all clouds that now surround the dispensations of his providence shall be removed, shall continue to employ many of my thoughts. With this expectation, let me rest content, and not by my anxiety and fretfulness provoke the Lord to answer my wishes in anger."

"THURSDAY, Nov. 28. — This morning again presents to my view the delightful sight of our ship sailing, with a fair and brisk breeze, and in good weather, towards

home. How ardently have I longed for this time! How many fears have I had that I should not see it under as pleasant circumstances as I now do! All my prayer has not been answered; but the most of it has in a striking manner. If I have not made a prosperous voyage, I have made a saving one. I have been supported in my way, and have transacted my business to the best of my ability. Accidents that I dreaded have been averted, and mercies almost un hoped for have been granted. Bless God, O my soul! My fervent thanks I have offered: may I be enabled to show my gratitude in my life and actions, as well as express it in words! Now my only present wish is, in temporal affairs, that my voyage may safely end, that I may meet the approbation of my employers, and return in peace to my friends and home. Grant this, Father of mercies, and thy name shall be praised in the assembly of thy saints, and in the hearts of many of thy faithful servants."

In December, 1812, Mr. Foster took up his residence in Portsmouth, as the junior and active partner in the bookselling firm of Tappan and Foster; Mr. John Tappan having furnished the larger part of the capital, and continuing in the firm till Mr. Foster's resources enabled him to conduct the business alone. He commenced business in the store, which he occupied till his death. He at once commanded general esteem and confidence; and, though his profits were small at first, by frugal management and assiduous industry, he early laid the foundation of the moderate competence, which might have been wealth, had not his charities more than kept pace with his increased ability to meet

the demands upon his benevolence. But he did not wait for ample means to enjoy the luxury of doing good. Always simple in his tastes and habits, in early life he practised rigid economy and self-denial, that he might minister to the wants of the less favored; and, by the judicious management of his resources and by his personal advice and sympathy, he made his gifts doubly availing. For several years, he was a boarder successively in two families; the surviving members of which, with his fellow-boarders, bear ample testimony to his uniform courtesy, his fidelity as a friend, and his life-long offices of sympathy and kindness. To the venerable lady, whose house was his first home in Portsmouth, he was as a son till the day of her death; for many years after he had a family of his own, he hardly let a week elapse without some token of his filial remembrance for her; and, when she had passed away, her numerous descendants held, for her sake, a cherished place in his regard and interest, and continued to look to him for fraternal sympathy or for fatherly counsel and aid.

20 In 1812, his brother-in-law, Mr. Green, died, leaving his family in straitened circumstances; and Mr. Foster immediately assumed the charge of the only child of his first marriage, James Foster Green. In 1817, partly on this child's account, he commenced housekeeping; his sister Margaret (soon after joined by Lydia, the surviving sister next in age) assuming the charge of the family. His nephew, then a boy of thirteen, was taken into his store as a clerk, when he had finished his school-

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education. He was a lad of superior endowments, of amiable character, and great promise, — a promise destined to be blighted to human sight, to be more perfectly consummated in a higher sphere of being. In 1819 he betrayed symptoms of scrofulous disease in his right foot. The case baffled the most skilful remedial treatment which could be procured in Portsmouth and Boston, and amputation was pronounced inevitable. The relief was but temporary. The disease, dislodged from its outpost, re-appeared in a more vital part, attacked the spine, issued in paralysis, and terminated his life, Sept. 19, 1821. He bore his protracted sufferings with the utmost patience and resignation, manifested a high degree of religious cheerfulness, and left the scene of his conflict fragrant with the dearest and happiest remembrances of a spirit touched to the finest issues by the early visitings of an afflictive Providence. So serene was the flow of Mr. Foster's domestic life, that he always looked back upon this as his one great trial; for when, in two subsequent instances, his home was darkened by the shadow of death, it was to gather well-ripened sheaves to the heavenly garner, and in answer to the long-proffered petition, "Lord, now let thou thy servant depart in peace."

In 1818, the South Parish Sunday School was established, chiefly through the personal influence and efforts of the pastor, Rev. Dr. Parker. Mr. Foster had become a member of the parish and church very soon after Dr. Parker's settlement, and had been his constant helper in the whole charge

of the sanctuary, and in the revival of a religious organization, which, in the old age and decrepitude of its former pastor, had fallen into decay and feebleness. The parochial Sunday-school was then a new institution; this means of instruction having been previously employed chiefly for the benefit of destitute children in our larger towns. When Dr. Parker first canvassed his parish for teachers, Mr. Foster was among the doubters, and expressed his apprehension that the experiment would issue in speedy failure, and in discouragement as to other and more hopeful modes of benevolence. He, however, yielded more to the entreaty than to the reasoning of his pastor, and reluctantly gave his presence and aid on the first sabbath. The late Nathaniel A. Haven was the senior superintendent, and Mr. Foster was immediately designated as one of his associates in office. Embarked in this Christian enterprise, he determined to make full trial of its capacities for good, and entered upon its duties with a painstaking assiduity and fidelity, which could not fail to generate zeal and enthusiasm. His doubts were speedily allayed, as he witnessed among the young evident tokens of an increased religious interest and a growing intelligence in divine things, and especially as he beheld in others, and experienced in his own soul, the beneficent influence of the teacher's office on the teacher's character. But little time had elapsed, before he began to regard Sunday-school instruction as peculiarly his mission,—as the one department of labor in his Master's vineyard, for which he was the best

adapted, and in which he could accomplish the most for the divine service. He was, from the first, emphatically the pastor of the Sunday-school. He made himself personally acquainted with every new pupil; became conversant with his character at home and at the weekday school; administered all necessary counsel, rebuke, and encouragement; and regarded him, wherever his lot was cast, as ever afterward an object of kind regard and Christian helpfulness. After the death of Mr. Haven in 1824, the chief place in the devotional services and the general instruction of the Sunday-school devolved on Mr. Foster; and it was a place which he filled with mind and heart and strength, devoting to it the free exercise of his best powers, and the full fervor of his warmest affections. There were, for the last thirty-four years of his life, scarcely as many Sundays as years which did not find him at his post as shepherd of the lambs of the flock; and, whenever he spent the Lord's day elsewhere, the Sunday-schools of the place of his sojourn occupied a large portion of his time to the exclusion of other engagements. / 8

In 1819, he was chosen Deacon of the South Church, and for the residue of his days exercised the office in the spirit of its first institution, as the faithful almoner of the charities of the church, the guardian of its poorer members, the ready counsellor and sympathizing friend of those in perplexity or distress, the comforter of the afflicted, the assiduous visitor of the sick and the dying. 26

In 1824, he married Mary Appleton, daughter of 30

Dr. Nathaniel W. Appleton, whose acquaintance he first made while preparing in Baltimore for his Lisbon voyage, and who had subsequently become with her mother a resident of Portsmouth. A happier home than his, one more radiant with the graces of a Christian household, man could not have had. It was his privilege to be connected in the near relations of kindred and affinity only with those who shared or imbibed his own spirit of piety, love, and benevolence; nor did so much as the shadow of doubt or disappointment rest on any portion of his domestic life. His sisters, who had for so many years presided over his household, continued honored and cherished members of his family. They were rich in faith, and, so long as they retained the power of active usefulness, abounded in good works. But for them was appointed the severe discipline of chronic and long-protracted infirmity and suffering. They were beautiful examples of patience, submission, and religious trust; and the kindness that anticipated their every want, relieved their burdens, cheered their loneliness, and watched with brotherly, sisterly, and filial tenderness, their slow decline, was doubly blessed. The younger of these sisters was released from her sufferings in 1844; the elder, in 1846. Some years previously, in 1838, he was bereaved of his brother William, a resident of Gorham, Me., who closely resembled him in character, and whose family were thenceforward the objects of his constant and munificent guardianship.

Mr. Foster's external life, from the date of his first

residence in Portsmouth, was comparatively uneventful, and attended by no painful vicissitudes. His business was never so extensive or complicated as to engross his time and thoughts; yet was such as to demand his unintermitted attention, until a few years before his death, when his only son, on becoming his partner, relieved him of many of the labors of detail, and divided with him his cares and responsibilities. Few men have been more constant than he at his place of business. But his desk was his study, and his bureau of counsel and of charity. It was there that he often prepared his lessons for the Sunday-school, and his frequent communications for the public papers and religious journals. It was there that he met those associated with him in the administration of religious charities, and in labors for the general good. It was there that those in need of his counsel or pecuniary aid were wont to resort to him; and, whatever the pressure of business, there never was a time when they had not the kindest reception and the most patient hearing. As he never aimed at wealth, or sought money but for its legitimate uses, he shunned large operations, and entered into no hazardous speculations. His exactness, punctuality, and prudence, together with the universal confidence reposed in his uprightness, secured for him gains beyond his needs, and amply commensurate with his desires. The very causes which prevented his large and rapid accumulation secured him against harassing embarrassments and sudden reverses. Because his mountain neither

rose fast nor towered high, it stood on a surer foundation.

But he had much business other than his own. Very numerous were the trusts confided to him in behalf of widows, orphans, and the else unbenefriended. For very many of the almost poor, he invested and disbursed their scanty means of livelihood, which, in his hands and eked out by his own generous additions, were like the widow's oil-cruise which the prophet blessed. There have been and are not a few, who owed it to his guardianship that they were not reduced to absolute destitution, and thrown upon the cold charity of the public. Nor was it only for those who had the claim of kindred, previous friendship, congenial tastes, or community of religious faith, that he discharged these offices. Necessity was with him an all-sufficient claim. Of those who were thus dependent upon him, the larger part became intimately known to him only by the misfortunes or bereavements that deprived them of more ample resources or of their natural protectors. Without distinction of social position, party or sect, he was as "eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a father to the poor."

Mr. Foster, from early life, held "the pen of a ready writer." His correspondence (extracts from which will form perhaps the most interesting portion of the present volume) was very extensive and copious. As in conversation, so in writing, he possessed the felicity of always saying the best thing at the right time, — advice when it was most needed and would be best received, congratulation while the joy

was still fresh and fervent, sympathy and consolation when the grief-stricken spirit felt the deepest need of support and comfort. In addition to these daily drafts upon his pen, he was no stranger to the toil of more elaborate composition. In this respect the Sunday-school proffered the first claims upon his literary efforts. General lessons for the school, annual reports, addresses to the teachers, new years' addresses to the pupils, were among the most striking and impressive, as well as the most useful, of his productions. A primary book of instruction, a book of prayers for Sunday-schools, and a series of lessons on the Lord's Prayer, were among his permanent and widely-circulated contributions to this department of literature. He also prepared numerous essays, for the teachers' meetings, on various subjects connected with the theory of religious instruction, the interpretation of Scripture, Christian ethics, doctrinal theology, and practical piety. He was at the same time an active member of the several literary societies in the place of his residence. Among these there were two which owed much of their success and interest to his ability as a speaker and writer. The first of these was the Portsmouth Forensic Society, of which his friend N. A. Haven was the projector, and for several years the most conspicuous member. This society held at regular intervals public meetings, at which essays were read by the members in course, and debates conducted on subjects previously selected. Similar in its constitution, though for the purpose of moral and religious cul-

ture, was the South Parish Society for Mutual Improvement, which, under the presidency of the pastor, held monthly meetings for the reading of dissertations, and the discussion of such subjects as were introduced or suggested by them. These associations were superseded by the introduction of the system of popular lecturing known by the generic though inappropriate name of Lyceum, in the organization of which Mr. Foster bore an active part, though we do not remember that he appeared as a lecturer in more than one instance. Indeed, in all matters of public interest, it was his uniform habit to occupy the front rank, while services were gratuitous or sparingly offered, and to withdraw and decline when laborers were abundant and within easy reach.

In the lowest sense of the words, Mr. Foster was not at any period in *public life*: in a truer and higher sense, he was never out of it. Of the offices filled by popular election, that of a member of the School-committee was (unless our memory is very treacherous) the only one that he ever sustained. To this he was chosen as often as he was willing to assume the charge; and, in point of fact, he permanently filled that office in his relation both to the teachers and their schools: for the teachers looked to him for advice and countenance no less when he was out of office than when he was their legal adviser; and there was no school in the city where his presence was not familiar and always welcome, and his words listened to with profound and grateful interest. But though, with this ex-

ception, he shrank from office, he was eminently a citizen, and made it a point of sacred obligation never to lose his vote, suppress his opinion, or withhold his influence in any important interest of the town, state, or nation. In the primary assemblies under the government of Portsmouth as a town, he always participated in the discussion of such measures as involved any question of right, of honor, or of social well-being; and on the most tumultuous occasions, at times when no other man could secure so much as a hearing, the first tones of his voice always commanded a respectful silence. And it was not infrequently in his power so to calm agitated feeling and to harmonize conflicting elements, as to place mooted points of policy and administration on their true merits, above all partisan preferences and animosities. He was always ready also to labor for the public. Placed on many important committees, he carried into trusts of this class the same rigid, conscientious exactness and thoroughness which characterized his more private transactions. The last labor of this description that he performed was as a member of a committee appointed to consider the expediency of procuring a city charter for the town of Portsmouth. We well recollect the minute financial calculations and the extensive induction of statistical facts on which he formed his judgment in the affirmative; and, from their knowledge of his habits of close investigation and their reliance on the soundness of his discretion, not a few were induced, simply by his name as appended to the report, to vote in favor

of a change which they at first deemed inexpedient.

Mr. Foster's bodily constitution, impaired by the sicknesses and exposures of his youth, never recovered its original hardiness; yet he enjoyed for the last forty years of his life an almost unprecedented exemption from severe illness. During our long acquaintance with him, we cannot remember a Sunday's absence from public worship, or a day's confinement to his chamber prior to his last illness. Under Providence, this was no doubt owing in great part to the regularity and simplicity of his whole mode of life, and to the consciousness of the frailty of his physical nature, which rendered him as reluctant to overtask himself as he was careful to fill up with duty the utmost measure of his capacity. For a few years after he was relieved of the sole burden of business, he seemed to gain new vigor, and gave good promise of an old age stronger than his prime. Previously confined to his desk and counter, he had journeyed but little, and that little either on business or on errands of mercy. But he was now enabled to gratify his innate love of the beautiful by more extended travel. From Trenton, Niagara, the White Mountains, Franconia, Winnipiscogee, and the great rivers of Maine, he derived the richest enjoyment, both for his æsthetic and his devotional nature; and, though on these excursions rapid locomotion always wearied and exhausted him, he generally returned from them with a fuller flow of spirits, a more elastic step, and a more healthful countenance. But, for the last few

months of his life, those who knew him most intimately had discerned symptoms of decline too palpable to be mistaken. His weariness from slight physical effort, and his growing indisposition to meet other social engagements than those of absolute duty, had led his most watchful friends to apprehend the near approach of some painful change, and to express the fear that he might not survive even a comparatively slight attack of illness.

There were other symptoms, too, of the nearness of his translation, in such tokens as a kind Providence often gives to those whom the Lord loves, when the time of their departure is at hand. Is there not often a special measure of felicity granted to their closing days, so as to make us feel that heaven alone could carry the climax of their happiness higher? And is there not often, too, a peculiar satisfaction, richness, and unction in their last opportunities of various kinds, their last visits to kindred and friends, their last performance of wonted duties, their latest utterances on occasions on which their voices had long been heard? In such cases, it would seem as if it were the purpose of the divine mercy to present the spectacle of a true and noble life with the last finishing touch that earthly infirmity can admit, with a beauty of form and setting that shall leave an always blessed impress on the hearts of survivors, — of a life culminating as it declines, rising while it sinks, and closed with so brief an appendix of infirmity and suffering that no shadow of death can rest on the memory of the once-living — the ever-

living. Thus was it with our friend. The last year of his life he himself would no doubt have pronounced the happiest. It would seem as if no good earthly gift were withholden from him; and his power of enjoyment was never more intense than at the moment when the summons came for him to "go up higher." As regards his own household, every promise seemed to have been fulfilled, and every wish of his heart gratified. The time had arrived when he could leave them without an anxious thought as to their future in either world. He had within a few months made peculiarly satisfactory and happy visits to the several circles of his kindred in Massachusetts and Maine, and had left in their homes those remembrances of his recent presence among them which death will embalm for them in perpetual freshness. In the October preceding his death, the meeting of the Autumnal Convention in Portsmouth had brought around him many of the friends from whom he had been long separated, and had given many who revered and loved him an opportunity, for which they will always be thankful, of listening once more to his voice, before it became for ever silent. On that occasion it devolved upon him to bid our guests welcome to the hospitalities and the Christian sympathies of their brethren in Portsmouth; and his fervent greeting in behalf of the living and the departed, his recognition of the spiritual presence of those who had passed from the worship of the sanctuary in which he stood to the service of the temple not made with hands, and the whole flow of his words,—as

from a spirit in intimate communion with the divine Fountain of peace and good-will, — befitted one who already stood on the margin of the river of death, and in near view of the heavenly Jerusalem. Deeply impressive as his salutation was when uttered, it has acquired a new richness of interest as connected with the last strongly-marked interlude in his usual routine of daily and weekly duty.

Had he foreseen his own approaching dissolution, it is impossible that he should have left more of the impress of his spirit than he did on his last services for the Sunday-school over which he had so long presided. On Friday evening, January 2, 1852, there was a meeting of the teachers. The pastor, though present, was disabled by illness from taking his usual part in the exercises; and a double duty devolved upon Mr. Foster. The subject was the Nature and Attributes of God. The tendency of the discussion was to discourage dogmatism on this, the profoundest of all themes of thought; to illustrate the paucity of our definite knowledge of Him who pervades immensity and twin eternities; and to recommend profound reverence, habitual devotion, and the service of an obedient life, as the true route to such intelligence of divine mysteries as man can attain. At the close of the evening, Mr. Foster took up the train of thought which had been developed, with a fervent, glowing eloquence, which we have seldom heard equalled, never surpassed. He spoke of the immeasurable distance between the Infinite and the loftiest of the finite;

of the unsearchable depth of the divine wisdom ; of man as, without revelation, lost and whelmed in the vastness of creation ; of his intense need that one should come from the bosom of the Father to re-assure him, and to lead him into communion with the Author of his being. He then passed to the one accessible aspect of the divine character, — to God in Christ, the Father manifested in the Son, the incarnation in human form of all of the divine that man can comprehend. He spoke of childlike faith as the sufficient and blessed substitute for the clear and full knowledge, which not only can never be reached in this world, but in which we may be growing for unknown ages, and the Infinite One will still be “in part unseen, in part but dimly seen.” He spoke of the assurance and happiness of prayer ; of its power to bridge over for the consciousness the infinite distance between the creature and the Creator, to inspire implicit trust and serene acquiescence amidst the clouds and darkness that often rest upon the dispensations of Providence, and to sustain before the inward vision the realities of a future spiritual existence. We felt, as we separated, that we had been lifted into the highest regions of devout contemplation by one to whom those regions were an accustomed and familiar walk. Often as we had listened to him, it seemed as if we had looked deeper into his spirit than ever before. And now we cannot suppress the imagining, — nay, we hesitate not to say, the confident belief, that divine mercy had given him a new dispensation of the bread of heaven to strengthen him

for the last journey, so near at hand; and that he had been breaking that bread for those associated with him in the labor of love.

The following sabbath was the first in the year. He officiated as usual in the communion-service. In the afternoon he delivered, as was his uniform custom, a new year's address to the children of the Sunday-school. The teachers felt that the services of that season were marked by the same fervor and loftiness of devotional sentiment that had warmed and edified them at their recent meeting. A solemn stillness pervaded the young auditory; and we cannot but believe that many of the children were permanently impressed by those last words of their revered teacher.

On that Sunday, no one perceived any marks of illness, though the seeds of fatal disease must have been already lurking in his system. At the previous midnight, and early in the morning of that day, there were alarms of fire; one of them not far from his own house. The air was sharp and cold, loaded with the elements of an impending storm. He undoubtedly took cold in consequence of his exposure at these fires, and on Monday was so ill as to absent himself from his place of business in the afternoon. On Tuesday he desired to see his physician, whose prescriptions gave him partial relief. On Wednesday morning he appeared better; but, in the course of the day, complained of a pain in the side,—the first marked symptom of the pleurisy, which, on the next day, assumed a more decided form. On Thursday he kept his

chamber and his bed; and, during the ensuing night, was restless, feverish, and in great pain. On Friday, leeches were applied to his side, with beneficial effect for the time; but the loss of blood debilitated him to such a degree as to render further depletion impossible. Though with diminished pain, he remained through the day in a highly febrile condition. On the afternoon of that day, he seemed, for the first time, to suspect the possibility of the fatal issue of his illness. He held a private interview with his son, with reference to such secular matters as would demand attention in case of his removal. He then remarked that his mother had died of pleurisy; but added, "Do not be too much alarmed; for I think it quite as likely that I shall recover." Early in the evening, his physician and very dear friend, Dr. Cheever, called, and found him much more ill than he had anticipated. He remained with him through the evening, and strongly insisted on watching with him; but Mr. Foster peremptorily declined the proposal, on the ground that, if he did this once, other patients would expect the like attention. At the time of leaving him, Dr. Cheever had strong fears as to the result,—more on account of the frailty of his patient's constitution than of the intensity of the disease; but, at the same time, he felt and expressed more hope than fear. An experienced watcher was procured, and his family retired for the night, with no suspicion of immediate danger. His wife, however, who was with him at frequent intervals, became aware before morning that the

symptoms were less favorable. It was a night of great debility and suffering. A little before dawn, he said to Mrs. Foster, "I hope I shall be resigned, but I do pray that I may not pass another such night;" then added, after a pause, "But why do I speak of my sufferings? What are they to what my Saviour endured? And his were laid upon him by his Father and my Father."

Saturday morning revealed to his family an appalling change for the worse. His breathing was short and laborious, and his utterance had grown feeble and difficult. When his youngest daughter entered his room, he received her with his wonted smile, and said, on her expressing disappointment at not finding him better, "I had strong hopes at one time in the night, when my pain nearly left me; but it was not so to be." When Dr. Cheever came into the chamber, he perceived at a glance that the case was beyond human help or hope, and was unable to conceal his deep emotion. His altered countenance and agitated manner gave the first distinct intimation to the patient and his family that his recovery was impossible. Mr. Foster read the intelligence instantly in the doctor's eyes, and received it without surprise or disturbance. Before any one else had spoken a word, he said, "Do not be troubled, doctor; you know that I never feared this: it is but passing from one mansion to another of my Father's house. You and I have always loved each other, and we shall still." He then spoke of the friends whom it would be his happiness to meet in the society of the

blessed ; and especially of Dr. Parker and Mr. Haven, with whom the many years of separation that had elapsed seemed never to have rendered his intimacy the less close. He then expressed a desire to see his pastor, who had been prevented, by his own continued illness, from visiting him during the week. Dr. Cheever proposed to go for him, and, before leaving the room, told Mrs. Foster aside, that, though a favorable change was beyond hope, and he could not live till another day, death might not ensue till afternoon or evening. When he had gone, Mr. Foster inquired and learned the tenor of this communication, and, with evident satisfaction, replied, "What! so soon? I thought that it would not be till Sunday certainly, or perhaps Monday; but, if it be so, rejoice with me to-morrow." He then dictated messages of affectionate remembrance to his neighbors and many of his friends; but after a few moments desisted, saying that it wearied him to talk, and that he must reserve himself till his pastor should arrive. He lay with his eyes closed. His daughter, who stood by him, saw a sudden change pass over his countenance. She called her mother and brother to the bedside; and almost instantly, without groan or struggle, he sank into his last sleep. His physician and his pastor arrived only to look upon his lifeless countenance, and to trace the signature of heaven's own peace on those features, as serene and beautiful in death as the face of a slumbering infant. Never, in our long conversance with similar scenes, has the death-chamber seemed so truly, so almost

visibly, the very gate of heaven. We felt that it was not death, but translation, ascension; and yet not a translation that removed him from us,—not an ascension that lifted him above our sympathy. As in broken words, but with full heart, we offered our thanksgivings for the departed, and our intercessions for the surviving, to the God of all consolation, we could not but feel that our friend's spirit was no less with us than with the Lord, and could enter most cordially into the suggestion of an old divine, that the soul of the dying believer, instead of "passing locally through moon and sun and firmament," may have "but a little way to go to heaven,"—nay, may "find new light in the same room, and be not carried into any other, but the glory of heaven be diffused over all." One was absent from the nearer circle,—one for whom the cup of grief was mingled in its full bitterness, but who was not permitted to enjoy at first hand the consoling and elevating influences of the closing scene. His eldest daughter was on a visit at a distant city; and her friends at home knew not her father's danger, till it was too late to summon her home before his departure. Could the unbroken household have surrounded his deathbed, and received together his parting benediction!—but no. In view of the finished beauty of his life, the brief season appointed for the trial of his patience, and the serene gladness of his last hours, if there be aught that our fallible wisdom would have ordered otherwise, we would check the thought,

and would say, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

The tidings of his death spread a general and deep gloom over our little city. Few there were who did not know him; none, who knew him, that did not regard him with reverence and affection; and of those who had been his fellow-citizens for any considerable period of time, there could have been very few who had not personal reasons to remember him with gratitude. Most of all was he mourned in the homes of the poor and the desolate,—of those to whom he had not only administered the outward blessings of a common Providence, but to whom, by every mode of gentle, kind, considerate attention, he had sought to fill the places near their hearts, made vacant by bereavement or desertion. On Wednesday, January 14, funeral services were performed at the church at which he statedly worshipped, which was crowded in every part by an audience, whose profound stillness and solemnity indicated the deep and pervading consciousness of a great public loss and calamity. By common consent, all the places of business in the town were closed during the service, and the whole aspect of the community attested the sincerity of the general grief.

We have thus given a rapid sketch of the external history of our friend's life. Of his character, for those who knew him, it would be superfluous for us to speak in detail; but, for the sake of those who may make their first intimate acquaintance with him through these pages, we will attempt to

indicate a few of his leading traits of mind and heart, though fully aware how hard it is for mortal hand to draw a life-like picture, with so little shading as truth will permit us here to employ. How much of this shading might have been needed, had his religious nature been of late development, it is impossible for us to say. His character had strong elements, which would have been strong for evil, had they not been subdued and sanctified by his early consecration to the divine service. He had a strenuousness of will, a tenacity of purpose, which would have been obstinacy, had not a conscience, rigid as tender, converted it into Christian firmness. His resentment was natively quick and keen; yet, through vigorous self-discipline, he brought it so fully under his control, that, in his later years, its chief office seemed to be the multiplication of opportunities for forbearance, kind construction, and forgiveness.

His mental endowments were of a high order. Whatever his culture or character might have been, he could hardly have failed to belong to the intellectual division of mankind, in contradistinction to the animal or sensual. His mind was clear, comprehensive, and discriminating. He seized instinctively on the salient features of a subject, and possessed that most availing of all philosophical aids, the art of asking questions aright,—an intuitive apprehension of the points at issue, or demanding investigation. His early school-education was brief, and somewhat desultory; but he was, in the truest sense of the words, an accomplished

scholar,— a liberally educated man. He read much and well, and never read to no purpose. He always, before reading a book, satisfied himself that it had for him enough of instruction, edification, or impulse in some worthy direction, to make it worth the time which its perusal would cost. He possessed also, what is perhaps, as regards books, the surest mark and the best result of a truly liberal education,— the knowledge where and how to find what he needed,— the power of using references and authorities. His opinions were his own, and were held in suspense when he had not the requisite data for his own independent judgment. His taste, both in literature and (within the limited range within which alone this can be affirmed of an untravelled American) in art, was singularly exact and pure. His love of nature was spontaneous and fervent,— not called forth alone on rare occasions, and for objects once or seldom seen, but elicited by every beautiful sunrise, and every brilliant moonlight night, and every tree and blossom. As a speaker, he was ready, fluent, earnest, and forcible. By nature reserved and self-distrustful, he overcame his native diffidence only under the impulse of strong feeling; and he therefore never spoke against time, or for form's sake, but only when the impulse was on him, and so long as it lasted. As a writer, he was clear, accurate, and strong. He thought nothing of style; and, in this regard, had neither model nor aim. But he always wrote because he felt; and his earnestness gave definiteness to his purpose, and

energy to his style; guided him in the choice of expressive words and graphic images; and imparted to his composition a nerve and point which can never be attained by those who write merely to meet the demands of an occasion, or to enhance their own reputation.

The manners of our friend were eminently those of a Christian gentleman, — the spontaneous, un-studied expression of a loving heart. Modesty and dignity were beautifully blended in his social intercourse. Flippancy, irreverence, and lax speech as to the obligations of morality or the truths of religion, met, indeed, with his prompt and warm rebuke; but he was tolerant of honest difference, forbearing toward ignorance, and hospitable in his reception of the opinions of others. He was especially considerate of the claims of the aged, the feelings of the poor and depressed, and the rights of the young. Nowhere was he so studiously mindful of all the forms of courtesy and deference as in the society of those who might deem themselves neglected or looked down upon. Rigidly sincere, he knew how to clothe truth in a graceful garb. Nothing could have been more alien from his habits than unmeaning flattery; yet never have we known the language of compliment employed with purer taste and more delicate discrimination than by him.

Mr. Foster's religious opinions were definite, and deeply grounded alike on the authority of Scripture, and on the cravings, sympathies, and adaptations of his own nature. They were not held as mere

items of belief, but as elements of his personal consciousness, trust, and hope. He was so firmly a Unitarian, that he found it difficult to conceive of any threefold distinction of the divine nature, which did not either identify itself with Unitarianism, or lapse into Tritheism. He held lofty views of the nature and offices of Christ, as the perfect image of God, and the spotless mirror of human perfection; as the Mediator through whom God receives the prayers and the praises of his human family, and dispenses pardon, peace, sanctifying grace, and heavenly happiness; as the ever-living Head of the church; as the sympathizing witness and helper of man in his conflicts, trials, duties, and spiritual attainments. With regard to the person of Christ, he held the views commonly, though inaccurately, designated as Arian. He cherished a profound sense of the evil of sin, the necessity of repentance and regeneration, and the entire dependence of man for salvation on the divine mercy as revealed in the gospel and pledged in the sacrifice of our Saviour. He felt the utter inability of unaided human strength to work out redemption from sin, and to comply with the conditions of the divine favor, and the need of influence and aid from above at every stage of the Christian life. He regarded the Scriptures with the most sacred reverence as the authentic record of the divine communications, and as of ultimate and absolute authority in all matters of belief and duty. With the firmest conviction as to his views of divine truth, he united not mere tolerance, but the warm-

est esteem and fellow-feeling for sincere Christians of every name, and was associated in spiritual fellowship and in the labors of benevolence with very many of creeds and forms the most unlike his own. In his estimation, a contrite heart and humble dependence on redeeming love were the sole essentials of practical Christianity; while, as to belief, he regarded an honest mind as the guide, if not to all truth, yet to as much of truth as would lead the individual soul through the mists of earth-born error to the realm of open vision.

But with him religion was not a system of belief, but a pervading spirit. His piety seemed not a separate trait of character, but the aroma breathing from his whole life. A stranger could hardly have looked upon his countenance, or entered into casual conversation with him, without perceiving that he was in the presence of a man of faith and of prayer. His countenance bore, not the expression of severe or ascetic devotion, but that serene aspect of subdued cheerfulness, of settled benignity, and of a spirituality unostentatious and unfeigned, which indicated a soul in harmony with God and at peace with man. In his conversation, there was no forced utterance of the language, no obtrusion of the themes of religion; but the readiness with which, under his treatment, all subjects of discourse were presented in their relations to divine truth and to Christian obligation, showed in what region of thought he habitually dwelt. Never did he appear so truly in his congenial element as in the act of prayer. His devotional services seemed the spon-

taneous utterance of a heart always near God and heaven; nor could the language of supplication and thanksgiving have been better adapted than from his lips to fill the souls of fellow-worshippers with trust, praise, and gratitude.

It was manifestly piety toward God that inspired and sustained him in a life of devoted charity. His benevolence had nothing of that impulsive character which flows from weak good-nature rather than from principle, but was wary, judicious, persistent, painstaking, self-sacrificing. It was not in the warmth of an enthusiastic temper, but with calm collectedness and the careful discrimination of objects, means, and modes, that he went about doing good. It was the great business of his life, the work that the Father had given him to do. And he loved best to do his alms in secret. None knew till his death, nay, probably none but God will ever know, the extent of his benevolent agency. Many, whose obligations to him were hidden from his nearest friends, have revealed, since his death, their great and long-continued indebtedness to his munificence; and many more first learned, by the drying up of sources of charitable relief, who it was that had for months and years secretly lightened their burdens, and ministered to their necessities. But his beneficence consisted not alone in giving. He seemed always on the watch for opportunities of kindness. Advice to the young, encouragement to the disheartened, sympathy with the afflicted, delicate attentions to the aged and infirm,—the assiduous discharge of all the good offices of a

neighbor and a fellow-citizen, attested the warmth, depth, and constancy of the sentiment of Christian brotherhood in his heart. We have never known any other person who effected so much and in so various ways for the good of his fellow-men, or who had incorporated Christian charity so completely and thoroughly into his whole plan of life. Nor was he, in the multitude of the daily calls upon his benevolent effort, insensible of the great evils and sins of the community and the nation, or indifferent to the various philanthropic enterprises of the day. Every cause of humanity had his ready aid and his cordial God-speed. As to reform, he had equally little fellow-feeling with the inert conservative and the reckless radical. He had little faith in agitation, — less than none in those irreverent, denunciatory, disorganizing, destructive operations, in which Satan is invoked to cast out Satan. But his disapproval of modes of action never alienated him from a good cause; though it sometimes constrained him to labor alone and in his own way, rather than incur responsibility for the errors, follies, or faults of his coadjutors.

As we have already said, and as our readers are well aware, the Sunday-school was Mr. Foster's preferred sphere of service and of usefulness. In the thirty-four years of his charge as superintendent, he retained the freshness and fervor of youth, with the mature wisdom of ripe experience. As to his consciousness there was no monotony in the duties of religious instruction, so was there nothing of formalism or routine in their discharge.

Rigidly observant of order, he was as far as possible from being the slave of system, or from imputing an independent worth and efficacy to mere external arrangements; but was always prompt in adapting the details of organization to the higher purposes of Christian nurture. During a large portion of the time, and especially for the latter years of his life, in addition to the first place in the charge of the school, he instructed an advanced class of young ladies; making it his object at once to give his pupils the results of his own ripest study and maturest thought, and to lead them to the heart-knowledge of God and Christ through the culture of the religious affections. For these class-exercises, and for his general lessons, he never trusted to the impulse of the moment, ample as were his resources, and rich as was his unpremeditated speech on unforeseen occasions. He was willing to bring only "beaten oil" into the sanctuary where he was wont to minister. His preparation for all duties of this class was, we will not say as elaborate as if he had been a mere novice in the work, but more and more prolonged and thorough, as, with increased intelligence of divine mysteries, he became increasingly aware of their depth and of the limitations of human knowledge and wisdom. Thus furnished for his office, he never presented those shallow, superficial views of truth, which may indeed satisfy the mind of infancy, but which the child, the youth, outgrows and looks down upon, and which, whenever they characterize Sunday-school instruction, do nothing better than to water the germs of irreverence and impiety by the very droppings of the

sanctuary. He never belittled the infinite themes of religion to adapt them to juvenile capacity, but maintained in his addresses to the young a dignity of thought, style, and manner, worthy of the loftiest subjects that can engage the contemplation of men or angels. But, for all this, or, we would rather say, because of this, he was eminently attractive to the young; for they saw "the chain let down from heaven;" they felt the unspeakable majesty and vastness of the subjects of his discourse, and were readily brought into sympathy with his own fervor of spirit. At the same time, there was a simplicity in his language, an affluence of appropriate illustration, and a sustained vivacity and energy both of thought and of utterance, that fastened the attention of children, both to his addresses and his devotional services, while he was listened to with equal interest and edification by teachers and adults of every age; so that it was regarded as no less a privilege to be associated with him in the office of instruction than to be under his charge as a pupil. Indeed, the prosperity of the Sunday-school over which he presided is to be ascribed in great part to his agency in the education of successive ranks of teachers, and in sustaining, through his intercourse with them, their zeal in the acquisition of religious knowledge, and their deep sense of the preparation of the heart requisite for the appropriate discharge of duties so sacred. Under his guidance, the meetings of the teachers were always made occasions at once of high intellectual interest, and of culture for the spirit of piety to God, and love to man. It is impossible to estimate the amount of his bene-

ficent influence in this department of labor. Hundreds all over our land are ready to "rise up and call him blessed;" and we cannot doubt, that, among those who have been most prompt to welcome his entrance into the heavenly society, there were very many whose hearts were first awakened to the love of God, and brought under the power of divine truth, through the fidelity of his instruction and the fervor of his prayers.

Our sketch has been imperfect. More, much more, should we say, had not our friend left such ample and rich materials for the biography of his own inward life. Enough has, we trust, been told to embody in definite form the remembrances of his friends, and to give those who had not this privilege some faint outline of a man honored, beloved, lamented by all who knew him, enriched with a goodly heritage of God's best gifts, the instrument of great and extensive usefulness to those of his day and generation, and followed to his last repose by the blessing of the widow and the fatherless, the innocent tears of childhood, the deep grief of every friend of goodness, the profound reverence of the whole community. God grant that the seed of the kingdom which he loved to sow may blossom from his grave; that, though dead, he may yet long speak to us of the deep things of God, of duty, and of heaven; and that, by following him and all who through faith and patience inherit the promises, we may carry forward their work on earth, and enhance their joy in heaven!

ADDRESSES AND RESOLUTIONS.

[This and the following address by the surviving superintendents of the Sunday-school were reluctantly furnished for publication, at the urgent request of the editor.]

ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, ON THE DAY SUCCEEDING MR. FOSTER'S DEATH, SUNDAY, JAN. 11, BY J. P. LYMAN.

As a band of mourners, fellow-teachers and pupils, we have met together this afternoon. We have come hither, not so much to attend to the accustomed duties of this place; for our hearts are too much stricken to be occupied with but one thought; but we have come, or rather been drawn by an impulse that we could not resist, to the spot above all expression dear to that revered and beloved one who spoke to us only on the last sabbath from this place. In what more appropriate place can we meet, at this season of severe trial and the deepest grief, than around this humble altar, and in this school that has witnessed the deep fervor and earnest efforts of his soul, with unremitting devotion, for the lifetime of a whole generation? Of whom may it be more emphatically said, that his works follow him; that he, being dead, yet speaketh? For his name is closely interwoven with the whole fabric of our social and religious being and relations. His practical wisdom, his devotion to the cause of humanity, and his fervent piety, have reared for his endeared name monuments all around us, more enduring than the frail tablets of earth. The inscriptions to his

memory are written on those pillars that uphold our social and religious life, and on which are based the foundations of our hopes both for time and for eternity. To abler hands belong the duty and the privilege to recount his services in the cause of man and of God ; but this feeble tribute we feel it grateful to render, offered as it is under such an overwhelming affliction as almost to paralyze the powers of thought and speech.

It will be our delightful duty to bring up before you, as we are able, in future time, the beauty of holiness as exhibited in his life and conversation, and to make him yet speak to you with the added sanction which death has given to his teachings. And, my young friends, what would he say to you, if he could now be heard ? He would entreat you to heed the lessons of heavenly wisdom here taught you ; to love the Sunday-school, even more than ever, for his sake ; to improve more and more, every sabbath you meet together here ; to make improvement — constant, untiring improvement — the great law of your lives ; so that, with each returning sabbath, you may find yourselves another stage onward in the heavenly way, and may lay here the foundation of the Christian character so deep and sure that none of the temptations of after-life will be able to destroy it.

And as to us teachers, what can we say, now that our chief support has fallen, and we are made painfully sensible of our weakness ? Our heart is too full for utterance. It is not necessary that we should speak. Let us listen to the voice to which death has imparted such solemnity. Would it not entreat us to dispel all gloomy forebodings ? Would it not assure us, that God will protect and bless his own cause, and, amidst human weakness, manifest his own power and love ? Would not the loved one entreat us to make his departure

an incentive to new activity in this sacred cause, and greater devotion to those interests which he ever cherished with such ardent affection? Would he not say, "Be faithful unto death in the work which death alone caused me to leave"?

If we can thus hear and thus do, oh how happy will be the re-union with our departed friend! What sweet communings shall we enjoy in a better world upon the work which he so faithfully wrought, while permitted to stay, and which has been left for us to continue and perfect!

ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOL, ON THE
SUNDAY SUCCEEDING MR. FOSTER'S INTERMENT, JAN.
18, BY J. F. SHORES, JUN.

LITTLE did we think, fellow-teachers and my young friends, when, on the first sabbath of this new year, we sang these words, —

"Some, but who God only knows,
Who are here assembled now,
Ere the present year shall close,
To the stroke of death must bow ;" —

little did we think that so soon they would be fulfilled; that the voice which then spoke to us, which then, with so much animation, wished us a "Happy new year!" would so soon be hushed in death; that he who on that day urged upon us, with so much earnestness and fervor, our duties on the commencement of a new year, would, ere one short week had passed, be called from earth to heaven. Yet so it is: he is taken. I ought to say, he was translated, so sudden was the call of our heavenly

Father ; and we are left to mourn, — not for him, oh, no ! for he has now entered upon the joys of heaven ; but we mourn for our own loss, — for a loss which we shall feel for years. The place in this school which he has so long occupied is vacant. We never more shall hear from his lips those lessons of truth and duty which he was ever urging upon us ; we no more shall see that form, with its bright and benignant countenance ; we no more shall see that eye, beaming with kindness and love. Hushed is the voice, closed is the eye, and all that was mortal of our beloved teacher now reposes in the silence of the tomb. But his spirit, that which gave life and animation to that form, the sparkle to that eye, and power to those lips, has passed to the land of spirits. In the eloquent words of another, “ Legate of heaven, he has returned with the tidings of his mission ; father of this school, he has ascended to advocate our cause in the bosom of his God. Solemn ‘as it were a pause in nature’ was his transit to eternity ; thronged by the shades of his friends, his approach to the confines of bliss ; pæaned by the song of angels, his journey beyond the stars.” Oh ! what a glorious meeting was that when his pure spirit was ushered into heaven, there to commune with those near and dear friends who had gone before him, — there to receive a welcome from that beloved pastor, whose mind first conceived, and who by his earnest appeals brought into existence, this institution, so dear to them both ; and from that near friend, with whom, hand in hand and heart with heart, he carried this school through the first years of its existence ; and from that band of teachers and pupils, who, from time to time, have been called hence ! Happy is the thought that we shall thus meet those beloved ones who have gone before us ; and happy, indeed, will it be, if, when

this world is closed upon us, and we have entered on that other state of existence, we shall be found worthy to take a seat with those loved ones around the throne of the Lamb!

Children, I would say a few words to you of him that is gone. He was a good man, — good in every sense of the word; and his goodness was manifested in every incident of his life. Go to the lone widow, and she will tell you of his goodness as manifested to her by his counsel and aid; go to the bereaved, and they will tell of those sympathizing words, uttered at the right moment and in the right way, which brought consolation to the grief-stricken heart; go to the destitute, and you will see substantial evidences of his goodness of heart; go to the young man, and he will tell you of those impressive words of warning and advice, which have clung to him through long years, and which have been as watchwords to his soul in his conflicts with the temptations of the world; go to the outcast from society, the man degraded in the eyes of the world, and listen to his recital of those heartfelt appeals to reformation, urged with power and repeated with never-tiring effort; go to the man of business, and he will tell you of advice and counsel, which have been to him the means of success; go to our schools, and you will learn of the deep interest he ever took in the education of the young; but, above and beyond all, in this school, the object of his tenderest love and affection, you will see manifested the deepest and strongest evidences of his goodness.

It will, I hope, be the privilege of an abler pen than my own to write the history of his untiring efforts to carry forward this school, — those efforts which, against all obstacles and discouragements, have made it so eminently successful and useful; to write, too, of his powers

of mind and heart, so admirably fitted for the station he filled, and which were manifested in this place, in the social circle, in the religious meeting, and in the places of business. Faithful as he was here, devoting his time and his talents for our good, he still found time for all those other duties of life to which he was called, and from which he never shrank. His duty to his heavenly Father claimed his first thought and attention; and to perform that faithfully and earnestly was ever his wish and desire. Into whatever path he entered, he went with his whole soul: when once convinced of his duty, he went straight onward, looking not for the praise of men, but feeling that he was doing his Father's work, and that, to do it aright, he must work faithfully; and thus guided by an enlightened conscience, and having an ever-present consciousness of his accountability to his heavenly Father, he filled every station in life in a manner worthy of himself as a man, and acceptable to his God.

Early in life, he acknowledged to the world that he had chosen Jesus Christ as his guide, that he had taken up his cross, and, with God's aid, would bear it manfully and cheerfully; and right manfully and cheerfully did he bear it through a long life, ever exhibiting to the world the graces of the Christian character, ever carrying into practice the truths in which he believed. He was not merely a believing Christian, but he was a practical Christian, who made himself known by his good works. It was this that rendered him so eminently useful. The words which he uttered agreed with the practice of his life, and men saw that he was sincere; and it was this that made him so highly respected by his fellow-citizens and so beloved by his neighbors and friends, and which called forth such a general expression of sorrow and sadness when it was known that he was dead.

Great men have gone to their graves, and are forgotten, because they possessed no moral power, — they left upon the community no stamp of their moral greatness. But how different is it with him for whom we mourn! His moral power was his great characteristic; a power which was felt wherever he went, and in whatever he undertook; a power which commanded respect even from the wicked and irreligious; a power which has silently gone forth, and which at this moment is felt in many a counting-house and workshop in this country, by many a mariner on the ocean and in foreign ports, as well as in our own community and neighborhood.

If there was any part of the religious character of our dear friend that shone forth above any other, it was his reverence, as manifested in the love of his Maker and of all his works. He looked upon all men as made in the image of their God; and, no matter how low or debased they might have become, still they were God's children, and as such required his sympathy, care, and attention. It was this reverence that caused him to admire so much the works of nature around him. How eloquently has he often spoken to us, on returning from a journey or on the opening of spring, of the beauties of the flowers and the fields, the hills and the valleys; and drawn from them lessons of truth, calculated to impress us with a love, not only for these objects, but for Him who made them all! How earnestly, too, has he labored to impress our hearts with that spirit of reverence which he felt! There was no trait of character of which he talked to us so often; for he regarded it as the corner-stone of the Christian character, without which all else is vain; and there was nothing that grieved him so much as any manifestation of the spirit of irreverence.

I might thus go through with every trait in his cha-

racter ; showing you how each part, harmoniously blending with every other, made up that whole which rendered him a man, a true man, a Christian man ; but this will be left for other occasions, knowing that we cannot have a brighter character to which to draw your attention, in exemplifying the beauty of the Christian life.

Children, our beloved teacher has gone from our sight, never more to return ; and we are left to draw from his death those lessons which will be for our good in time and through eternity. How shall we improve this admonition from the eternal world ? — this admonition, which says to us, Be ye also ready, as he was. Look not upon death with terror or dismay ; for, if you live righteously and do your whole duty, you will be enabled with cheerfulness, as he did in his last moments, to say, “ I am but going from one apartment to another of my Father’s house.” This event says to us, “ This life is but short, and will soon pass away ; give not up your moments to its vanities and its trifles ; live as if you were immortal beings, destined for higher joys than this earth can afford ; prepare now in your youth for eternity, and then the summons which calls you hence will not come upon you unawares ; learn to live with some object in view ; begin now, by perfect obedience to the will of your heavenly Father, to enter into those joys, the full extent of which you cannot realize, till time with you shall be no more.” Endeavor to recall to your minds the sincere words of truth and duty which have been so often addressed to you ; and let them have a strong hold on your souls, leading you to think more and more of your heavenly Father. Cherish every incident in the life and character of your departed friend ; so that, by his bright example, you may be led to that brightest of all examples, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

To us, fellow-teachers, the voice now comes from the eternal world, bidding us to be preparing ourselves for life, for death, and for immortality. Solemn and impressive is the call to be up and doing; to renew our diligence in this good and holy cause; to exert our best efforts for the good of these youthful minds, committed to our charge. Our staff and stay is gone: he on whom we leaned for support, guidance, and counsel, is taken from us. But let us not be discouraged: the work in which we are engaged is of God, and to him must we look for fresh strength to enable us to go on. Fear not; for the spirit of the Holy One is ever with us; the goodly company of angels are near us; the spirit of the lately departed is hovering over us, and will be one of those ministering spirits sent to incite, encourage, and soothe our saddened hearts.

God grant that these afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

RESOLUTIONS.

At a meeting of the teachers of the Portsmouth South Parish Sunday-school, held on Friday evening, Jan. 30, 1852, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted, viz.:—

As, in the providence of God, we, the teachers of the Portsmouth South Parish Sunday-school, have been called to mourn the sudden removal of one, who, for thirty-four years, has been a most faithful teacher and superintendent; to whom for a long period we have been chiefly indebted for the continued success and prosperity of our school, and to whom we have all looked for aid, guidance, and sympathy; therefore—

Resolved, That, as we now meet together, it is not only with the feeling of personal bereavement, but with a deep sense of the loss our school has sustained in the departure of one who gave himself so entirely to its best interests, who labored so assiduously for its good, and whose heart was so devotedly consecrated to its improvement and usefulness. To him we have looked as the chief shepherd of the flock under our charge; and have ever felt, that, in doubt or difficulty, we could find ready aid and sympathy in his long experience, his sound judgment, and his true Christian love and faith. In his genial sympathy and affection for childhood, and his peculiar power of interesting even the youngest in his simple and holy instructions, no less than of adapting his words so as to excite the minds and hearts of the eldest among us, we feel that there was a bond of union which peculiarly united us together as teachers and pupils, and has ever made us feel that we were *all* but pupils in one great school, beneath the guidance of one Shepherd.

Resolved, That, in the general exercises of the school, we shall long mourn the silence of that voice, which, from sabbath to sabbath, has conducted our devotional exercises, — the fervent outpourings of that pure spirit, which seemed ever to feel the Father's presence, and whose prayers of intercession were breathed from a heart wholly consecrated to this holy work. That, in his pure and consistent Christian character; his unwearied zeal and devotion to the good of others; his constant observance of all the outward institutions of religion, united with a living faith and the deepest reverence; his delicate perception and keen sense of all that was beautiful in the works of nature; and his genial love and true sympathy, — we feel that we have sustained a bereavement, which, personally, and as a united body, we can meet only through his spirit of faith and trust.

Resolved, That, as teachers, we shall ever cherish the most affectionate and grateful remembrance of all that he has done to aid us in our duties, to guide us by his mature counsel and wisdom, and to render our social meetings seasons of so much improvement and happiness to each and all of us. That we recall with deep feeling his constant efforts to promote and sustain entire harmony of sentiment and purpose among us, and to lead us to feel, indeed, as members of one and the same household of faith.

Resolved, That, while we deeply feel the vacancy among us, we would yet rejoice that we mourn not as without hope. To him, death was but the uplifting of the veil, the enlargement of life; and, while we regard his pure spirit as but translated to higher spheres of usefulness and progress, we would ever feel that his spirit and influence are still with us, to excite, to guide, and to animate us in duty; and from henceforth would we sacredly associate his name with those who established, and from the first so faithfully devoted themselves to the best interests of, our school, — PARKER, HAVEN, FOSTER.

Resolved, That, while we mourn the removal of our beloved friend and superintendent, we would yet yield to no feelings of despondency or doubt as regards the future welfare of our school. But, while we shall look in vain for one wholly to supply to us his place, we would also feel that a new and solemn obligation is now laid upon each and all to take up the work to which he was so unweariedly devoted, and to go on in humble trust and cheerful faith, and never to let an institution, now so sacredly endeared to all our hearts, fail through our want of faith, devotion, or interest.

Resolved, That we shall ever cherish the most affectionate remembrance of his beautiful life, and of his

devotion to the interests of this school; and that we can best manifest our grateful sense of the rich blessings we have so long enjoyed in his faithful services and Christian friendship, by the entire consecration of heart and life to Him from whom strength and guidance is never sought in vain.

Resolved, That, in the severe bereavement our pastor has now sustained, we would express our warm and heartfelt sympathy, and our earnest desire to do all that lies in our power to lighten his labors, and to perform some of those thousand services of love which our departed friend so delighted to render. And we would gratefully rejoice, that in him we have one to whom we can still look for aid and guidance, and who has ever manifested so deep and true an interest in the welfare and prosperity of our school.

Resolved, That, while we so deeply feel and mourn our own bereavement, we would also remember those whose home is now made desolate, and would tender to them our deepest and warmest sympathy, with the earnest prayer, that, in this season of sorrow and of trial, theirs may be the peace and the hope which the world knows not of; and that their hearts may be filled with those rich and holy consolations which our beloved friend was ever so ready to impart to others, in every scene and season of trial.

Resolved, That these resolutions be placed upon the records of the school, and that a copy of the same be presented to the family of our departed friend and to our pastor.

(From the Records.)

Attest,

J. F. SHORES, Jun.

Secretary pro tem.

At the annual meeting of the Portsmouth South Parish Sunday-school Society, held May 18, 1852, the following preamble and resolutions were passed : —

Whereas, since our last annual meeting, JOHN W. FOSTER, one of the founders of this school, and from the commencement one of its superintendents, has deceased ; and whereas we are desirous of placing upon our records some memorial of our affectionate respect for his exemplary character ; therefore —

Resolved, That this sabbath-school, in the death of its senior superintendent, has lost its head and guide, — a friend, who, with every attribute of character to render him successful, has, for more than a third of a century, given to it his prayers and efforts.

Resolved, That while the church, the cause of education, and every benevolent enterprise, have sustained a loss by the death of our friend, yet, next to his own cherished home, it must be most frequently and most painfully felt in this place, so long the theatre of his labor and success, — in this school, where every thing reminds us of what he was, and what we have lost.

Resolved, That for ourselves, and in behalf of the thousands who have been connected with this school, so long guided by the matured experience and wisdom of our departed friend, we tender to his family our sincere condolence and sympathy.

Resolved, That, as a token of reverence for the memory of our deceased friend, we will postpone for the present any attempt to fill the office which his death has vacated.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of Mr. Foster.

SELECTIONS

FROM

MR. FOSTER'S LETTERS.



L E T T E R S.

TO HIS SISTER MARY, WRITTEN A SHORT TIME BEFORE
HER DEATH.

PORTSMOUTH, Sept. 29, 1814.

I HAVE received a letter from —, in which she gives me an account of your health rather different, I confess, from what I expected, after so long a silence. I had built upon that silence an expectation that you were better; but I was mistaken. You are then confined, almost wholly, to your bed. Well, my beloved sister, I will not lament your increasing illness, however painful the moment “when the last wave will close upon our hopes for ever.” I trust we shall be too well convinced that the same moment consummates your happiness, to allow a sigh, but for ourselves, to escape our bosoms. Few persons leave less happiness behind them; and none, I most firmly believe, will enter upon greater. You will leave some friends to follow you; but you go to meet many, dear to your soul, never again to part. Mary, I think I behold those blessed spirits, who, in the boundless regions of eternity, view a thousand years as but one day,

waiting, with what we must name impatience, for the moment which shall give you to their society. Go, then, when God pleases. I would not raise a wish to detain you. If we love you, we must wish you happy ; and you shall have this proof that we do love you. However desirous we may be to have you relieved from suffering and suspense, it will not be an unfriendly office to exhort you in patience to possess your soul. With so near a view of eternity, months and years must dwindle into insignificance. Count not your days, then, by your throbs of pain, but look back upon the road behind, and the remaining part will appear short ; and, gathering all your remaining strength, remember that probably it is the last effort you will have to make.

You need not be told how much I long to see you and be with you. I grieve to be absent ; but let me not murmur. I should have been up to see you, at any rate, before now, had we not been in so much bustle and confusion here. Folks will not be easy. They have been expecting John Bull all summer ; and now it grows so late, they say he must come soon, or not at all, — the last, I think, a very likely conclusion. I have very strong expectations of peace this winter ; more than I had during all the talk about it last summer. The British Ministry have now retrieved their character by a vigorous prosecution of the war, and our side are fully tired of it ; so, among them, I think they will patch up a peace after this campaign is over. As to Boston, I think it as safe as the White Hills. I

feel no personal apprehensions ; but, as others have done, so have I, — removed the most valuable part of my property into the country.

I cannot but hope to see you ere long. If we get more composed here, and Mr. — returns, I shall try to run up for a little while certainly. In the meantime, my dear Mary, be assured of the constant and affectionate remembrance of your brother.

TO A NEAR RELATIVE.

—, —, 1820.

I have tried, several times of late, to write you a letter. I found I could not *talk* to you as I wished, and I have, as yet, been equally unable to *write* as I could wish ; but I think it my duty to say some things to you, in one way or the other. Nevertheless, I would premise that I am fully of opinion that the ill I wish to remedy “is more a subject for the skill of the physician than for one whose office it is to minister to a mind diseased ;” for, although I think your “mind diseased,” I think it is only from its sympathy with your body. A direct application to the mind may, however, be useful, united with some pharmacopœal receipts.

Like a skilful “leech,” I have been for some time endeavoring to find out the nature and seat of your disorder. I have succeeded only so far as to be convinced that it consists in mistaken views of His character whom we should love and serve with our whole minds and our whole souls, and in equally mistaken views of your own character and your

own duties. If I can show you that your views are erroneous, I may do some good. But how am I to hope for success, when you have had just and proper views laid before you so often, and by far abler hands, without producing any change in your mind?

One thing, however, I must do. I must bear my testimony against your present course. I must seriously and solemnly lift up my hand against such practical exhibitions as you are giving of the character of God and of religion, as false and dangerous, calculated to bring dishonor upon his name, and to retard the progress of religion in the hearts of those around you. Even while I write, my dear —, I tremble lest I should increase, instead of relieving, the evil of which I complain. I fear that the warmth of my expressions may wound your susceptible heart, and only serve to make you recoil within yourself, and hide what I wish to eradicate. But do not mistake me. I full well know that no one sooner than yourself would shrink from purposely injuring the sacred cause. On the contrary, I know that no small part of your present affliction arises from a fear that you have not done, and are not doing, sufficient to advance the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. Thus, by no very uncommon error in frail humanity, increasing, or in fact creating, the very evil you deprecate, you "would do good, but evil is present with" you.

The gloom which hangs over your mind seems to arise, first, from regret for past misimprovement of your time and talents; secondly, from a feeling

of imperfection in present duties ; and, in the third place, from fears entertained of coming short of your heavenly Father's favor at last, from both these causes.

First, You regret past misimprovement of your time and talents. Without inquiring how true it is that you have thus neglected your duties, I would ask you, are you not sensible that the belief that you have done so causes you great pain ? Do you not ardently wish that you could have proof, that on similar occasions you would actually do as you wish that you had done ? or, rather, feeling still doubtful of your own strength, do you doubt that, if in the same situations, you should ardently pray that you might be enabled to do your duty ? I think you will not deny these things to be true of your feelings. Now, tell me if this is not repentance. But, say you, how can I tell that my repentance is sincere, if I have no opportunities of bringing forth the fruits of true repentance ? I reply, that you have these opportunities. It is not needful that the same duties precisely are to be performed : any duties that are given you to perform, if well performed, are proofs that you are now desirous of doing God's will ; and, if so, they are proofs also that you would equally well perform the same duties which you say you have neglected, were they again presented to you. To this you will object, that you do not now perform your duties in the manner you ought, and do not possess the feelings which ought to inspire you at the present time. The consideration of this is what I proposed

in the second place. You feel miserable from the apprehension that you do not perform your present duties aright. You think you do not do all you might for the service of your Master, and for the benefit of your fellow-men. What are the most obvious of your duties in your present situation? Plainly, I think, they are these: Patient submission to the will of God respecting the state of suffering in which he has placed you; gratitude, that in judgment he has remembered mercy, and, before he laid his hand so heavily upon you in sickness, that he permitted you to be among friends whose duty, as well as happiness, it is to ameliorate your sufferings, and administer to your comfort; and earnest endeavors, by all the means God has given you, to promote his glory, and to benefit your fellow-creatures. I think this summary comprises all you have to do; and I believe even your own judgment of yourself will not pronounce you guilty of a deficiency in the two first articles. You cannot deny that you suffer bodily pain with patience, and that you feel all the gratitude you can for the mercies you receive. As to the method of showing this gratitude, which is included in the last article, you may be more disposed to condemn yourself; and I should be afraid to acquit you, although we should differ in our reasons. By your patience and gratitude, as exhibited to those who come within knowledge of you, you have the most efficient means of promoting the glory of God, by benefiting your fellow-creatures. When one is blessed with health and strength to labor, he is bound to seek out, by

active exertions, means of doing good ; he must carry his light where it will shine to most advantage to the cause. You are plainly bound to keep up the flame, but to let it proceed from the candlestick whereon it is placed. Its mild and cheerful beams will fill an extent of circle of which you have no conception ; but if, by impotent exertions, you strive to scatter its rays beyond, you only diminish its brightness, cause it to flutter, and perhaps to disappear. Has not this already, in some measure, happened ? When I remember the sweet cheerfulness which used to appear upon your mind,—your serenity and patient submission, and even the joy that sometimes enlivened your countenance in the early days of your illness,—when I call to mind the happiness it brought to my own feelings,—the effect it had upon others,—the observations I have heard made by some who are not too apt to think of such things, as well as by others who knew in part what it was, “How valuable does religion appear in such a case as hers!”—when I think upon these things, and then look upon your fallen countenance, hear your gloomy sighs, listen to your sad forebodings, I cannot but exclaim, “How is the gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed !” What now has become of the consolations of religion ? Have they failed in their utmost need ? Has long-continued suffering worn them out ? or were they an ignis-fatuus, that deceived her by its glimmer, only to leave her in greater darkness ? In my mind, even while I know how much of this is owing to bodily infirmity, such

questions have arisen. What, then, must be the effect upon those who are always ready to doubt the power of true religion, aside from fanaticism? Here, then, is a failure in duty. Probably you will not allow it. You will say, "The comforts of religion do not belong to me; I am unworthy to enjoy them; and, when I appeared to possess them, I was deceived myself, and was deceiving others. I am rather bound to show, by my deep humiliation and lamentations, how vile I have been, that others may shudder and tremble, and take warning. I am bound to lacerate this poor body, which has been the instrument of so much sin; and, by unceasing acts of humiliation and penance, to punish myself for a course of life which nothing but deep-laid depravity could have induced me to lead." If this is not the language of your lips, it is that of your actions, or at least it is the interpretation which others will put upon them. And let me ask if this is likely to bring honor to God, or to promote the cause of goodness in your fellow-beings. Who, in his senses, will believe that you have been, or are, this vile wretch? Who that has any just views of the Deity, or of the requirements of religion, will believe that you are under their true influence? Will not beholders be induced to say, "Is this the burthen which is called light? Is this the yoke which is called easy? Is this the service of that Master who, we are told, will not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? If so, from such service let us be delivered! let us enjoy life while it is ours; for, if this is to enjoy religion,

which is said to be a foretaste of heaven, it is no heaven for us."

You feel that your present duties are imperfectly performed. Did you say you were perfect, your own mouth would condemn you. But that this idea should render you miserable, can arise from no cause but mistaken views of what "the Lord your God requireth of you." I am certain that one so well acquainted with you as I must be, would have discovered if you were so far from the right way as to have reason to fear that at last you should come short of the favor of Him who loveth mercy. I think it will not be difficult to show that you have wrong views of the requirements of God, and of what (according to the character he has revealed of himself) "you must do to be saved." But as I have already run out to a great length, and as I wish to be more full upon my "third head" than I can at present be, I will defer that until another opportunity.

Meanwhile, my dear —, let me beg of you to excuse any hasty expressions in this; to think over my hints, and see if there is not some truth in them. But, whatever you may conclude, believe me to be yours affectionately.

TO JAMES FOSTER GREEN.

PORTSMOUTH, May 29, 1820.

I have been trying all day to get a chance to write to you, but I have been unable to do so; and I have only a few moments this evening for that

purpose, while I wish to spend hours with you; for I have a great deal to say to you.

I received your "journal," and am much gratified to find that the kindness of our friends does not abate, but that they still show a lively interest in you. I hope they will be rewarded for their kindness. I wish very much that I could come and sit by you, even for half an hour. I want to see how you look, and how patiently you bear your long confinement. I want to inquire how your mind is; whether you feel resigned to the will of God, and are ready to suffer yet longer, if he sees best. I would also ask you, whether, supposing that this sickness should even be your last, you think you could say from your heart, "God's will be done." You know, I observed in my last letter, that, in the day of adversity, we are directed to consider and reflect. Now I would ask you if you find you can do this. It will never make any one be in more danger to think of death, even if he is ever so slightly unwell. You know that death must come sooner or later; and to think of it will not hasten it. To neglect to think of it, even when we are in perfect health, is wrong; much more, then, when we have any touch of those many diseases which may be the means of closing our days. About these things I should like to talk with you. I think we could talk of them, and yet not be gloomy. We could talk of the joys of heaven, of our hopes of future happiness, and the pleasure we shall have in meeting at last in that world where parting will be no more. There we shall see your dear mother, who

left you before you knew her value; your father, too, and my dear mother and father; and, more than all, there we shall see our heavenly Father, and our Saviour, who himself has died, and knows what it is to die. There, too, we shall meet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,—all those venerable men of old of whom we have read and heard so much. There we shall see and converse with that great apostle of our holy religion, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and whom we have also loved from the charming displays we have perused in the accounts of his character in his Gospel and his Epistles. We could talk of the joy we should feel to find ourselves in that state where sin and sorrow will be no more; where every sinful thought and unholy desire will be done away, and we shall be happy because we are holy; where our joys will not be interrupted by the knowledge that they must soon end. Do you think that these reflections would make us gloomy? Or do you think, that, after meditating upon them for awhile, it would be a very hard task for us to say that we were willing to go whenever God should call us? Should the thought of leaving our friends here occur to our minds? Should we not remember how many more friends we shall meet? Should we ask if we are prepared to go? That, truly, is an all-important question; but we know that it ought to be answered in the affirmative; and, if we cannot do it now, the sooner we begin to prepare, the better. You know where to look for assistance and direction in this infinitely important concern. Look, then, to God, my boy.

Ask him to guide your thoughts aright, and give you strength to prepare for his holy will, whatever it may be. Should he give you health again, these thoughts will do you no harm: they will always do you good. And, should God's will be otherwise, how much happier will you be for having prepared your mind in season! Now, I know you have too much sense to be frightened to have me talk thus. I do not believe, that, if you were told that it is possible your sickness may be dangerous, you would be frightened. I only wish to lead your thoughts into a good channel, and to give you subjects of useful meditation during your tedious confinement. — told me, in a letter the other day, that you said to her, "The voice seems to speak louder every day." And so, indeed, it does. We seem to have of late so many calls that we must be deaf and hard-hearted indeed if we do not listen.

If it fatigues you to write, I wish you would dictate a letter to —, and let her write me a few lines from you. I must leave you now, for it is late, and I am tired; so good-night! I hope you will sleep sound, and be able to ride to-morrow. Good night.

TO — AFTER THE FAILURE IN BUSINESS OF A
MUTUAL FRIEND.

PORTSMOUTH, April 21, 1827.

I do not wonder at the sombre tone of your letter, since I read its last paragraph. I do not wonder, I repeat, that it has cast a shade over your

feelings, and tinges all you see with a sad coloring for a while. But there are some of our blessings which no accidents can diminish; and when do we feel the value of these so highly as when all the rest are obscured, or when some painful occurrence gives us admonition of the insecure hold we have on our best worldly hopes? But our best way, in such cases, is to turn our thoughts chiefly towards the things that are bright. When the world looks dark and loweringly, let us look above it: let it go for a while, and it will by and by seem more cheerful, and we shall always be ready enough to return to it. But we should always keep in mind, that the most extensive and the blackest cloud bears but a minute proportion to the whole of that pure sky which it veils from us; and that that sky is always illuminated by the bright sun; and (while I am in figures) let us remember, that, although the lightning may blast one source of our happiness, the remainder are just as safe as they were before. We are only reminded how safe they are by the tenure by which we hold them. And by what better tenure could we hold them? Are they not all in a Father's hand? We cannot control them, but he can; and would we take them from his hand? Would we venture to alter, had we the power, one single occurrence in his providence towards us, and risk the unknown train of events which might depend upon it? Yet how hard it is to keep out doubts and fears! When we put the question direct, we may find that we can say that we are willing to leave all to our heavenly Father; but

how much do we feel and act, a great part of the time, as if we did not dare to trust him! Much of this anxiety, I know, arises from the fear that we shall not do all our duty, and that misfortune will visit us by means of our own neglect. What God requires of us is all intended to promote our happiness; and therefore whatever means he takes to lead us to a right knowledge and performance of our duties, is a means to increase our ultimate happiness. If he send us afflictions because we have neglected our duty, it is in mercy still. But we should believe, that, if he can find in our hearts a real wish to know and do what is right, he will suggest to our minds the way which we ought to take, and give us strength to walk therein. We ought not to doubt this any more than that he will give us our daily bread.

Now, here is a long letter, and as yet not more than a word about those dear friends whose case lies so near my heart. But what can I say about them; and, still more, what can I say to them? Yet how can we enough rejoice that our friends have that sure rock of ages to rest upon! How impotent do we feel all our attempts at consolation, till we bring that support to view; and then how safe do we feel for them! They never can mourn as those who have no hope; and when we feel our mouths shut up from the words of comfort, we can point to Heaven, and smile with them in the rush of inexpressible comfort and peace, yes, and joy, that comes to the soul. Oh, blessed be God, that so many of those we love, so large a proportion of

our friends, have that infinite, that invaluable possession; to which all worldly riches and honors and enjoyments are as the paltry glitter of the diamond to the full blaze of the sun at noonday! We feel with them in their sorrows, for sorrows they must have while here; but we can rejoice with them, with joy unspeakable and full of glory too, even here. Say to them, that, while I sigh with them, I will take comfort for them; that these shades will serve, and do serve, most powerfully to set off the blessed light of their best hopes; and they will serve, too, to brighten their and our characters, and, by enlarging our capacities, make us more fit for purer and higher joys than can reach us now.

You must not let this event, or any event, make you feel that unhappy insecurity which will shade all your enjoyments. We are bound to enjoy God's gifts, or else we cannot be grateful for them. Would you think a person grateful for a present you made him, if that present was laid away to moulder in the dust? The same hand which has led us on thus far, is still extended for us to lean upon; and shall we dare to suspect its insufficiency, because it has not in every case met our weak desires? Be ready for duty as it is pointed out, and the path will be made so plain that you shall not err.

TO A SISTER IN BOSTON.

PORTSMOUTH, March 10, 1828.

Although I have abundance of work on hand, which it would be well for me to attend to, yet I do not think I shall lose any thing "in the end" by spending the half-hour more, which I had stinted myself to work this evening, in a little confab with you. I want to talk with myself, and I can never do that with any great effect, unless I do it pen in hand. I may therefore kill two birds with one stone (I cannot think, without stopping, of a better phrase), and let you hear my talk. —, I presume, will tell you what I have been thinking about for the two days and nights last past; and you may suppose that subject is now uppermost in my thoughts, and that of course I shall talk about it.

You may suppose the thought that we might be called to part with our little boy came into our minds, when we were convinced that he had an attack of the croup. How did I find my mind (I ought to use the singular and first person now, for I have had little time to talk and compare notes with — or —) — how did I find my mind prepared for such a call? It is hard to answer this question. I believe the simple inquiry as to the parting would have been easier to settle. I think I could give him up; but, oh, to see him going, — to see such a lovely being suffer, and look to me for help, and be unable to relieve him! My God, spare me, spare me such a trial! And here I cannot but see how imperfect is what I call my submission. How

much of this willingness to have him gone is because I should then feel no dread of any other suffering, — should then feel sure that he was safe, and for ever at peace! Let me not think, then, that it is all submission. What do we know of our own hearts? How should we rejoice that all our feelings and struggles are better known to God than even to ourselves! How should we bless him, that we may throw ourselves at his footstool, and with any degree of sincerity say, "Do with us what seemeth thee good"! This general desire we may feel, although we should often shrink from any particular application of it; but to know that this is sincere, must we not think of particular applications of it, and see if we can acquiesce in them as truly? We should; but surely we need not expect our hearts not to quail under some things which will rise to our thoughts; and if we can say in the same sentence which offers the prayer, "Let this cup pass from me," — "Nevertheless, thy will, not mine, be done," — it is all that is necessary; it is all that is required; it is all that our Lord's example teaches us. I will, then, bless God that I can say this: I will not doubt that it is all that is required. I do rejoice, and I may rejoice, that God enables me to feel that I can say this; and I will rejoice that I can say it.

But the threatening danger is passed for this time; and is the feeling which warms and excites my heart, pure gratitude? Oh, yes! it is a moment of pure gratitude; and should we wonder that mere humanity can feel, can sustain, such a

sensation, but for a moment? The silent, the speechless, the thoughtless feeling is a ray of heaven's happiness; and can it endure in a soul still linked to its tabernacle of clay? Let us bless God for the moment; and let a remembrance of it suffice us, without expecting more. All we can do is to labor to fix this remembrance in our minds, and, by referring to its brightness, borrow some help to our comparatively dark steps beyond it. What idea can we form of the bliss of heaven so pure as that of all gratitude, all love,—all, entire, unmixed love, and devotion in its full sense to Him who is “all in all”? Nothing else can it be. To be able to show this in every thing, to have it the soul within us, to live and move and have our being in such a sentiment, is all he can wish who, with the whole soul, has once said, “My God, I thank thee.”

Dear —, my half-hour has expired, and well it has; for I am coming at no point, no end,—perhaps you may think no sense. Yet, dear, I have been talking to myself, and I have a great deal more to say before I come to the point; but I must go home now, for the clock strikes eight.

TO A NIECE.

PORTSMOUTH, April 14, 1831.

I dare say you will open your eyes to see a letter from “uncle John,” whom you never wrote to, nor asked to write to you, in your life. But they tell

me you are sick, and sick folks are sometimes sad, and folks who are either sick or sad want something to cheer them up; and I have the vanity to think that a letter from me may help a little to do that, provided I am very cheerful myself, which I assure you I am just now, although I have for the last three weeks seen some of my dearest friends suffering under sickness, and have had a night or two of the same myself. But our kind Father in heaven has carried us along, and has sent us many blessings, even in our hours of trouble. And when I look at your poor aunts, who have so much of constant ill health to bear, I am ashamed to say a word about my own slight indispositions; and yet I see them, even while the body is bowed down with pain, cheered by the hope "which is set before them," and looking forward to a better state; and I cannot but say, even had I no evidence within myself, there must be something, there must be a great deal, in religion; for it is religious hope which supports them.

And you, my dear —, have a good deal to bear in your languid state of health, when, at your age, it is natural for you to be expecting to enjoy the world and its blessings, if ever. But I trust, nevertheless, that you too, young as you are, have this hope, which can secure you against despondency, even though illness and pain may be your lot, instead of health and buoyant spirits and gay pursuits. I know your education has been such as to lead you to religious thoughts, and promote religious feelings in you; and, although neither your natural disposition, nor yet

your sober, steady kind of education, may be such as to incline you to so much fervour or earnestness of emotion as some others may exhibit, yet I trust you have too much good sense and justness of reasoning to let this trouble you. There is no more reason to expect that religious feeling will affect every one alike, than to expect that every one should be affected alike by poetry or music, or the beauties of nature; for, while one is excited to rapture and enthusiasm by these things, another, equally happy perhaps in the enjoyment of them, will be calm, still, and placid. How was it even with the disciples of our Lord? See the affectionate, the "beloved disciple" John, resting in confiding love upon his Master's bosom, or standing in tears at the foot of the cross; while the ardent, impetuous, fervent Peter exclaims, "Though I die with thee, yet will I not forsake thee." Which was the truest, and which was the most zealous Christian?

My dear girl, God has made us of many and widely differing characters and dispositions; and, when his spirit, although it is one spirit, operates upon different dispositions, or differently tuned instruments, if I may use the similitude, it produces different effects. Should I see a man who was warm and ardent and zealous in his common pursuits, quiet and calm, or even perfectly rational, when first affected with religious sentiments, I should doubt the depth of his impressions. On the other hand, should I see a person naturally mild, retiring, modest, and composed in every thing else, heated with religious feeling, full of talk about his

new hopes or fears,—busy, showy, restless,—and especially if he was censorious, confident, or forward, I should tremble for the result. I should say it was an unhealthy state of mind, and might end in apathy, or spiritual death. So, if I saw a person who from his youth up had been educated to seek after God,—who had ever been in some measure surrounded with a religious atmosphere, and, if not deeply affected, yet always thinking of God and religion with respect, and some degree of love,—if I should see such a person, under some especial circumstances of excitement, calling himself the vilest of sinners, declaring that he had always been an enemy of God and full of iniquity and sin, I should say of such a one, “Thou knowest not of what spirit thou art of; this is animal excitement; it is not the calm, dispassionate work of the spirit of God. These fervors will pass away, and leave you cold and comfortless. True, correct self-examination would not bring you to these results. You would find much, in your heart, of sin, much failure in duty, many short-comings. But, if you say you have ever hated God, you deceive yourself; and, although now you may feel more deeply, than ever before, the worth of religion, the goodness of God, and the blessing of being permitted to give yourself up to him, still you are doing wrong to decry the former influences of his grace, which have ever been drawing you, as with cords of love, and through the education you have received in the domestic circle and the house of God, unto himself.” And again, I should say to that very common case with the

tender and sensitive mind, which, when the thoughts of religion come warmly to the heart, feels painful apprehensions that all is not right with itself,—which, seeking in vain for something entirely new, finding nothing which it has not felt before, though perhaps in a less degree, fears that it has nothing of true religion, no repentance, no giving up of itself to God, no just sense of sin,—I would say to such a one, “What is it you seek? Do you require of God to treat you as he would a ‘heathen man and a publican’? Have you been such? Is the thought of God and religion now for the first time, in any shape, presented to your mind? Has it not rather, for a long time, and under various circumstances, been familiar to you? and do you complain that you feel not as if it was now for the first time opened upon your view as a new and glorious hope? and you—must you look upon yourself as if God had never given one call to your soul?” Those friends of piety do an immense wrong to the cause, and bring immense affliction to many pious hearts, or rather to many a heart seeking after piety, who teach that all must feel alike. Many a humble soul has been brought with sorrow to the grave, who loved God with its whole powers, because it could not find that it had the same experience as one who has never been taught to know the truth in childhood and youth,—as one who has ever lived without God in the world, until, in some awakening moment, his blinded eyes were opened, and, with strong cries and tears, he was brought to the foot of the cross.

My dear girl, I have learned to distrust all severe mental or bodily fervors upon any subject : they are ever to be suspected, both by those who feel them, and those who witness them. This was not the way of Jesus Christ in his preaching or in his praying ; nor was it ever his endeavor to produce them. His aim was to instruct, to convince the reason, and, through the judgment, to warm the heart. I have often thought to myself, when hearing of or hearing this kind of preaching or of praying, before an excited and sympathizing audience, full of ardor and feeling, what would be the effect now if the speaker should suddenly stop, and read the Sermon on the Mount, or repeat the Lord's Prayer ? Let any one try to repeat this prayer, or read this sermon, in the same style of declamation in which some preachers pray and exhort, and see what they can make of it ! And so let them take the advice and the discourses of Jesus at any time, especially in John, just before his death, and see how far they will go to promote the kind of feeling they desire to see arise in the hearts of their hearers. This will be like cold water in their view ; and were it human language, or did they dare to say so, they would call it " cold moralizing."

But I hope, my young friend, that, as I said at first, it is not necessary to guard you against all this. And yet, when I see so much going forward in the religious world, calculated to mislead the young and inexperienced, to make them think that religion consists not in the humble desire to know and to do the will of God ; in grateful love

towards him, showing itself in steady endeavors to obey his laws, and to be useful to his creatures; in firm faith in his promises, and trust in his perfections, evincing itself by unrepining submission to all his dispensations, in the full assurance that he overrules all, and will make all things "work together for good to those who love him," — but, instead of all these personal, quiet, continued duties, we see every effort made to produce animal excitement; when every thing must be external; when the closet must be forsaken for the prayer-meeting, — the domestic fireside and the domestic altar for the conference-room or the lecture, — the study of the Bible and the heart for the more rousing, more animating declamations of the pulpit; and the sober discharge of the every-day duties of life, the kind, good-tempered, patient endurance of little trials, thought nothing of in comparison with frequent attendance upon public exercises; — when I see all this, I tremble for the poor lambs of the flock; and I wonder not that they are fearful and sorrowful, if they find not in themselves the power to get up as much fervor as they see in others, and I wonder not if they follow the multitude to do this evil. Jesus would not lead them so. My dear girl, excitement is not religion. Look to the "Teacher sent from God:" let him be your guide, and fear not. If you can say to Jesus, as did the disciple of old, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," — be of good cheer; be not afraid. He needs no violent emotions of the animal spirits to convince him of your love. He wants no struggling

as of a drowning man from one whom he has ever been ready to support. He waits not for an agony before he will put forth his hand to save. If you feel your heart go out to him; if you can say, "I am sure I love God and Jesus Christ," you may be as sure that your desire will be accepted. This desire is the love he wants; and he will feed the flame, until, in a brighter world, it breaks forth into joy and peace unspeakable, and full of glory. If you can find in your heart an assurance that the society of the religious, the pious, and the good, is more delightful than the society of the profane, the depraved, the polluted,—fear not that God will banish you from the one, and consign you to the other.

Whatever may be the result, I hope you will believe this one line, namely, that I am your affectionate uncle.

TO A FRIEND IN SEVERE AFFLICTION.

PORTSMOUTH, Nov. 23, 1835.

Possibly a letter from me may reach you, my friend, while others may not. You will not wonder if the agitation of the last few sad hours should occasion the omission of the intelligence from home you will desire; therefore I will write you. All are well; but all are full of sorrow, full of sympathy, full of anxiety for you, but full of hope too,—hope that your strength will not fail,—that Christian support is given to you in all its power and majesty. It will be, I know. I feel sure, that,

though an Almighty arm alone can support you, an Almighty arm is extended to support you. O my dear ——! rest your throbbing head upon that Father's arm; lean your feeble frame upon the breast of your "elder brother," the man "acquainted with grief"! Your God and your Saviour sympathize with you; and, although seeing the end from the beginning, they grieve not for what they know is for good, yet they know your trial, and know how to carry you through it. You will not be forsaken: you cannot be alone; for the Father himself is with you.

The spirit of your loved child is still hovering around you, free and happy. Yes, my dear friend, the spirit to which you were once the guardian angel, — the spirit to which you were the means of giving immortal as well as mortal being, is not far from you: a thin veil only need be removed, and you will behold the mystery revealed. Strengthen yourself, then, for a little longer; come and lead on a little farther those other spirits who yet need your ministry; and, in due time, the family shall be one.

Would that I could speak words of comfort which mortal man cannot speak! But a greater than man is with you. To Him we commend you.

TO A NIECE.

PORTSMOUTH, Dec. 19, 1837.

I send you herewith a little parcel, which contains some love-tokens from your friends in Portsmouth.

Among the rest I have ventured to put up these little books; and, with one of them, I must be permitted to add a friendly word. The Book of Family Prayers is the one I allude to. You are soon, dear —, to be one of the heads of a family. Your influence with the partner of your life will never be greater than at the commencement of your family relation. Let that influence be first of all applied to the endeavor to have the family-altar erected. I know how difficult it is for a young man to begin the office of priest to his own household. But I know, if it does not commence with the commencement of the family relation, the domestic worship will be likely never to be established; at least, not until some sad affliction calls the heads of the family to remembrance; and then they may remember their fault with tears. Let it not be so with you and your partner, my dear niece. Say to him on the first morning, — yes, on the very first morning of your domestic life, — “Let us now raise the family-altar; let that sacred fire be now kindled, never to go out.” If unused to the office of prayer before others, he still may not refuse to read one of the prayers from the book which I send you. Begin so, and you can easily change to extempore prayer.

It is an old saying, that a new house should not be moved into without *first carrying salt into it*. This has more meaning than a mere old woman’s whim, or a vulgar superstition; but the salt is the salt of the morning and evening sacrifice. It may be said, “Why should we have this formal service

when there are but two of us, — when we know each other's feelings, and that we both pray in secret?" But the command of God is ever wise. He knows, that without the form the spirit cannot long exist in frail human hearts. But I mean not to give you a long letter, nor to urge a duty which I esteem so important and delightful. My object in sending the book was to give you an opening to speak of the subject to your (soon to be) husband. Give my regards to him; and to both of you I would offer my best and kindest wishes. And to God — the God of all the families of the earth — I offer my fervent prayer, that all of domestic felicity which you can hope for may be yours, so far as is consistent with that preparation which we need to prepare us for the blessed family collecting in heaven!

TO A NEAR RELATIVE.

PORTSMOUTH, May 21, 1837.

It seems to me, dear —, that much of your difficulty in relation to prayer lies in the sentiment expressed in these words of your own: "It seems of too sacred a nature to be performed because I know it is a duty, in the hope that the love of it will follow when it becomes a habit. It should be the offspring of love and strong desire; and shall it be entered upon with the cold feeling of duty only?"

Here, it seems to me, you make a mistake in the nature of prayer, — what it is; and I should

almost think it enough to answer in the words of Montgomery, which I have placed on the first page of my little book on the Lord's Prayer. But I know you will say, "That is what I lack: 'the soul's sincere desire' is the very thing which I lament the absence of." I would ask you to examine yourself, and say if it is absent. "In such a state of mind," you say, "I can only exclaim, 'Lord, teach me to pray;' 'Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me;' 'Take not away thy holy spirit from me, but lead me in the way everlasting.'" Now, let me ask, did you not pray while you were writing these very words? Were they not "the offspring of strong desire"? Still you will say, "Although it may be so, I could not have had such a feeling, if I had not set about having it because I felt it to be a duty." But you did set about it. You felt that the absence of a spirit of prayer was a grief to you. You wished my counsel; and, after many hesitations and puttings off, you finally did set about asking it; and, as you reflected upon what you should say, — as you examined the causes of your difficulty, so as to lay the case before your friend for his counsel and advice, — the spirit came. "As you mused, the fire burned." Am I not right?

But you are not yet satisfied. You say, perhaps, "I may admit that sometimes such a transient glow of feeling will come over me; but my usual state is one of icy coldness; and shall I attempt to pray while I feel this frigidness of soul?" Yes, I answer: attempt to pray. Place your difficulty in

another point of view. What will you say to that profane, godless sinner whom you wish to reclaim? You urge him to become religious. But, says he, "It is a thing for which I have no taste. I see no beauty in it; I feel no longings after God; to come to him I must have something more than this cold indifference which I now feel." What is your advice to him? Now, where is the difference, except in degree, between the two cases? Yet you would tremble to advise him to put off the attempt, because he could make it "only with the cold feeling of duty."

Again you will object: "Prayer is one of the highest privileges of the full-grown Christian. It is not like the first beginnings of repentance, — the first dawn of the new life." I answer, Yes, it is. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath." And the infant must inhale it to begin to live; the growing youth must draw his nourishment from it; and the old man dies if it ceases. Your difficulty, then, does not arise from its being a duty too holy to be performed, until perfection is "already attained." You must grant that you "ought always to pray, and not to faint." If you do grant this, you will never omit your attempts because you think you do not attain your object. You will not restrain prayer by foregoing all means. You will not dare to neglect appointed means, in the hope that extraordinary means will be afforded you.

But you revert to the original object you had in consulting me. "Why is it," you would ask, "that I cannot take that satisfaction and delight in this

exercise that I know many Christians do?" In the first place, I answer, you give other Christians more credit for their delight and freedom in this privilege than belongs to them. You read or hear of their enjoyments in this way, which come to the best like "angels' visits" only; and you read or hear also of their intervals of coldness, and of the "absence of God's countenance," as they term it; but you think only of the first, and forget the last, when you are comparing yourself with them. In the second place, you are not constitutionally of so warm and ardent a temperament as many others. It takes more to move you; and, for this very reason, you must more carefully follow up means, and not be discouraged so soon as you might be, if you found that, on every other subject, and in every other duty, you were always prompt and ready, and easily moved.

With every one, however, there are some peculiar obstacles, peculiar dangers, peculiar temptations, and, of consequence, peculiar means. What are yours? I think your greatest trouble arises from a want of power to fix your mind and thoughts; and this trouble arises from the want of early and persevering discipline. This is no uncommon fault; indeed, it is a prevailing, an almost universal, evil; so much so, that a person is remarkable who possesses the power of close thinking. But it is never too late to begin. If you do not begin, you can never make any progress. The power will not come to you: it must be acquired. The best way of beginning to learn to think is

to learn to read. Take a book that has some thoughts in it; not a narrative,—a story. Take such a book as “Ware on the Formation of Christian Character.” Here are thoughts ready cut out for you (so to speak), and you may go to work and make them up. I mean that you have not the labor (too much to begin with) of inventing thoughts; but they are laid out for you. Now, if you read a page or a paragraph, then stop and see if you have it; see if you can think it over again yourself,—not repeat its words, but turn it over in your mind until it is yours; find objections, if you can; answer them; reason it out. If you do this, sentence by sentence, page by page, going back and over again and again, until you are sure, you will thus find the power of reading become almost a new faculty to you. You will be surprised into a new pleasure. Although, at first, you will be “for ever” reading a little book, yet you will have acquired a power which will be worth a thousand volumes, and which will make all your future reading worth a thousand times more to you. Confine your reading for a good while to this sort of books; lay aside newspapers, stories, mere milk-and-water books, or strong-drink books; they are only made for excitement. Take solid food, yet have it tender. Such a book as Ware, and with it the Gospels,—with, say, Barnes’s Notes,—will be all you want for all the time you will get for private reading for a long period. When you have learned to read, take Mr. Ware’s chapter on prayer, and practise upon that; and you will need no more advice upon this

subject from so poor a hand at practice or theory as I am.

Another thing I would have you understand for your encouragement. You must not be surprised if you do not find language flow easily in private prayer. Some, whose circumstances require them often to pray in the family, or more publicly with others, and who are then fluent, find, in private prayer, that the tongue is slow to utter, even when the heart is full. When leading the devotions of others with your own, language must be used as fast as thoughts, or nearly so. The exercise is double; the thought is to be conceived, and then the words are to be found to express it. Thought, therefore, must be kept under check. In private, this necessity is not felt. We know that the God with whom we are holding communion sees the heart and reads the thoughts; and we may feel, or rather think, what would fill a whole page while we are uttering the single words, "Our Father who art in heaven," or "thy kingdom come," or "forgive us our trespasses," or "deliver us from evil." This, however, is not the case until after language has been first used, until a series of thoughts has been affixed to words by the very amplification which afterwards becomes comparatively unnecessary. Language, too, should always be used in private prayer. The words may in time become very few; but some are necessary to the farthest advanced in the spirit of prayer. A mere musing is not prayer, let it be remembered. Distinctness of thought is necessary, though distinctness of words may be less

so, after the power of thought is acquired. Reading of forms of devotion (with thought, however) is most useful, either at the time of prayer or at other times.

But I need not go on. If I had not felt that you would more readily read my letter than Mr. Ware's chapter, I would only have referred you to that. Read that book, my dear —, and think about it; and, you may depend upon it, you will find your difficulties gradually abate, and finally vanish.

I have not written you any thing like such a letter as I thought I could, after receiving your letter; but, despairing of doing better, I shall let this go, with my assurances of sincerest regard and love.

TO HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER.

PORTSMOUTH, May 9, 1843.

We are all longing for a letter from you; for we are wholly ignorant of your movements since we heard of your having gone to —

Our fellow-christians who are designated by the term "Orthodox," or rather a large portion of them, seem to feel that so much of religion consists in a right state of the opinions, that they too commonly spend their greatest strength in trying to make folks believe right. Many of our own denomination, again, seem to think that it is all in all to feel right; and therefore address the feelings, and paint beautiful theories, rather than urge the conscience to a holy life, to right and consistent

on. Now, we should esteem it of importance to be right, because that will make us feel right in regard to all our obligations and all our relations, both towards God and towards man ; and we would strive to believe and to feel right, because then we shall be most likely to do right ; for what-
ever shows not its power in our life, our every-day life, is of comparatively no worth. But I do not mean by "the life" merely the action of life, but the whole being. We must be good, if we are religious. We may do good actions from a sense of duty, or from a sense of the beauty which we see in those actions ; but it is a higher thing to be good. Do you think, daughter, that I am quibbling, and that you cannot understand me ? I wish I could make myself clear. "There is none good," says our Saviour, "but one ; that is God,"—none perfectly good ; and yet he also tells us to "be perfect, for our Father in heaven is perfect." Here opens the work of eternity. We are to be always going on to perfection, happy and more happy in our growth. We begin perhaps at a very low stage. We avoid wrong actions, and do right actions at first perhaps from mere fear, in its lowest sense,—the fear of God's anger. But even this restraint will lead us to some knowledge of holiness ; and we may come to the true fear of God, that is, reverence for his character and attributes. We begin to find pleasure and beauty in right action ; to love it from the pleasure thus afforded. As we become more and more acquainted with virtue by these means, we see more and more to love in it, and in

all that is connected with it. Thus we may go on,—slowly it may be, and with many backslidings, but, by our heavenly Father's help, still go on,—until nothing which is unholy can give us pleasure; until goodness and truth alone are desirable in our eyes. This is to be good. Then good feelings and good actions come of course; they emanate from us as the fragrance from the rose; no effort, no reasoning, is required to call them forth; they are “our life.” Such a state we can hope only to approximate even in a long life here; but great progress has been made by some eminent individuals, and a very happy degree of it we may continually see among religious people. Indeed, to our eyes, many appear to have attained to it, who, in their own eyes, are far, far from it. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, its own temptations, its own failures. But it may know, too, its own efforts and its own successes, and rejoice, although with deep humility. The nearer we approximate to this state of being, the more is our happiness secured; for perfect goodness is perfect happiness. And it is to form us to this state of being, that is the end and purpose of all God's dealings with us. His commands and threatenings are to arouse and quicken us; his invitations and mercies, to excite our love and gratitude; his instructions, and the whole message, life, and death of Jesus, to enlighten, comfort, guide, and encourage us; the sorrows of life, to wean us from lower joys, and teach us to look for higher things. The best affections of the heart twine themselves about objects here on earth, which are

riven from us and carried up to heaven, that our affections may go with them, and gather themselves around what is there permanent and eternal.

But, my dear child, in order that we may attain to any degree of this holy life, this holy being, that may bring us much peace here, the progress must be begun early. A very few years of neglect, or of indulgence in trifling or degrading pursuits, will, in the susceptibility of youth, stamp impressions most difficult to efface, — may implant tastes and habits most difficult to eradicate; and years, which might have been spent in progress, must be employed in undoing and overcoming the effects of delay. I hope and I trust, my daughter, that you have begun the good course. I have indulged the hope, that religious feelings are, at least at times, strong and lively in your heart. I pray God to strengthen and increase them. Encourage them yourself: cherish them as your soul's life. Be not afraid to pour out your whole feelings, in all their simplicity and warmth, to your heavenly Father. Let your parents help you as much as they can. Be frank and open with us. You cannot delight us more than by letting us aid you in developing your spiritual nature. Feeble and imperfect as we are ourselves, our experience will be of use to you. We can sympathize with all your difficulties; for we have been through them. We can help you, too, if you will let us do so, and encourage us to do so, in the most difficult part of your great work; namely, that of knowing your ownself. To encourage us to this often painful, but highest, duty of

friendship and parental love, you must show us that you trust us. You must not, if we tell you of one rock or one quicksand in your way,— if we tell you of one fault or one error,— think that we see all your path to be full of dangers, or that we see other faults and errors which we do not mention. You must not show yourself discouraged by what we point out; but, on the contrary, you should be encouraged for your safety in having those by you who will help you. Watch, and rejoice that they find no more to warn and admonish you of, while they find so much to approve and be comforted by, in your heart and life.

But I am quite alarmed to find how long a letter I have written. I am alarmed because I fear you will find it tedious. However, as ladies sometimes look at the end first, perhaps you may do so; and therefore I say here, that you need not read the foregoing until some leisure day. . . .

And now, dear daughter, have I not written you a letter? I said in my last hasty scrawl, that I wanted to do so; and here you have it, from your affectionate father.

TO HIS SON.

August 4, 1843.

I hand you my birth-day offering; it is an offering to your mind and heart, and not to your eye. There is one prevailing, pervading purpose in all Dr. Channing's writings, which, although it gives the title to only one of his shortest publications, is

manifestly present to his mind as a chief aim in all he published,— I mean the desire to promote self-cultivation among men of all ages and ranks, but especially among the favored and intelligent young men of his country. The ever-sounding tone of whatever string he touched was the capacity of man for interminable growth, and the responsibility under which he is laid by that glorious gift,—self-cultivation; it was to arouse men to a sense of their own dignity, and to persuade them to do for themselves what no external power can do for them.

This sentiment, my dear boy, I want to implant deeply within your breast. I rejoice to believe that it is already there; but so numerous and insinuating are the influences to deaden or suppress it, that I wish to exert every means I can to keep it alive and active. The seductive power of the common pleasures of youthful life is not so dangerous, I think, to you, as is the love of ease, or repose of mind and body. I may be mistaken, but it has seemed to me that such a disposition was rather growing upon you. Perhaps it is because I know the dangers of the situation in which you are placed, that I have this fear. The state of business prevents your having sufficient employment in that way; while the absence of any distinct object before you, in a literary way, makes a strong effort necessary to induce you to pursue a systematic course of study. As a habit of reverie is destructive to the power of energetic thought, so is a miscellaneous, desultory, dreamy sort of reading,

destructive to a taste for, and a power to profit by, such study as can form and strengthen the mind and heart. The opportunities for reading which you have, subject you to great danger of the weaker, instead of the stronger taste. You have a great deal of broken time; all sorts of books are within your easy reach; and it is only by an effort of the will, and a strong one too, that you can deliver yourself from that danger.

But, my son, I believe I know your mind and heart sufficiently to trust with safety their operations, when once called into action. I have been more than once warned not to trust too much to hints in my paternal influence over my children; but I cannot believe, that, with such minds as God has given them, the plan I have adopted of giving them hints — of suggesting thoughts and duties to them, and leaving their own minds to digest them — can fail of leading them right at last. It has ever been my maxim, that one self-adopted rule of duty is worth a thousand prescribed by others, by mere authority. Am I right or wrong, my son? I watch with an anxiety of which you, at present, can hardly conceive, for the answer which my children are to give, in their affections and minds, to this important question, Has your parents' plan and course of education been right and efficient?

May God bless you, my boy; and may every birth-day which he may renew upon you here below find you better prepared for your birth-day into heaven!

TO HIS SON.

April, 1844.

I have for some time wished to talk with you, my dear son, upon some topics of importance; but the "convenient time" has not seemed to come, so I have concluded to write to you. Perhaps it is better to write than to speak upon the subjects now on my mind, at least at first; so that you may think over my remarks, and afterwards seek further discussion, if you wish to do so.

In what I have to say, I desire to be simple and plain, and to address myself to those good feelings and that good sense which I am happy to believe you to be endowed with, and which, when you allow them their full operation, will, under divine grace, guide you right, if properly enlightened. But there are some things even in every-day life, upon which experience alone can enlighten us fully; yet upon which the experience of others may give us such instruction as will forearm us, and enable us to pass through our own experience unharmed.

You have now entered upon a period of life when many new sensations, new thoughts, and new objects, will be continually rising within and around you. It is useful to be informed of what objects we are to see, when entering upon a new country; for, although the descriptions we receive may give us but very faint conceptions of those objects, they will enable us to recognize them as they arise before us, and to look for their several effects and consequences.

It is your intercourse with female society upon which I wish particularly to speak to you now. At an earlier age than yours, I was thrown upon the path of life amid many more dangers than, I trust, you will ever have to encounter. From the palpable and grosser dangers of my position, it was comparatively easy to escape; for upon these rocks and shoals and quicksands, beacons have been erected which no eye can overlook, and no mind be so dull as not to comprehend. But there are other dangers, less obvious to the unwarned, but which may cause most disastrous shipwreck to the peace of the delicate mind. In my own experience, and still more in my observation on others, I have seen enough to make me anxious that you should not be, as I was, left to your own chance, uninstructed, unwarned, unadvised. For, if this be your case, possibly some of your most innocent feelings, and even your good impulses, may lead you into danger, and disturb your future peace.

The first thing that I wish to urge upon you is, in your selection of your female acquaintance, to be awake to the true beauties of the female character; among which stand foremost and chief, modesty, and delicacy of feeling. The utmost witchery of manner, as well as feature, may exist for a little season, where there is no true delicacy. But it is only witchery: its power is over the senses alone, and that power is transient. If its spell is cast over us, it may be soon dissipated; but there remains a sense of mortification that we have yielded to it. But, worse than this, the temporary

homage we may have yielded will perhaps have been made use of to fix a hold upon us that we cannot so easily break. Advantage may be taken of our temporary weakness to shave the locks of our moral strength. And this, too, — not in any way which, in the eyes of most people, would be thought deserving of high censure, — would be perhaps termed only a praiseworthy degree of worldly wisdom. But, to a mind of true refinement, such “policy” will ever be abhorrent. Let me be plain. You may already have seen (and, if you have not, you will yet have many opportunities to see) some young ladies, full of life, abounding in attractions of an external character, whom, when more closely viewed, you find deficient in most of the qualifications which even your young mind will acknowledge to be necessary to ensure permanent esteem and respect. Such a one may succeed in attracting the attention of a most worthy young man. In the hilarity of the common intercourse of young persons, such a one would probably succeed better in attracting attention than would the quiet and retiring manners of the more delicate, though really far more sweet and lovely female. The former, indeed, makes attraction the business of her life. Now, it often happens, that, under the transient influence which such a one may acquire over the young man I have spoken of, she may lower, for a season at least, the purer notions of female delicacy which his own native modesty suggests. She may convince him that her manners are the true picture of innocent frankness, &c.; and, while the delusion

lasts, she may injure his delicate moral sense, and, moreover, may succeed in throwing around him a net, from which, when he awakens, he will find it impossible to escape, without violating some of his most honorable feelings, or, at least, laying himself open to the charge of having done so.

I touch here one of the most common dangers of a well-educated young man (well-educated, I mean, in his heart and conscience, as well as head), upon his first entrance into female society; and I wish to open it fully to your reflection. It is a danger which exists everywhere, in all grades of society; it is a thorn which lurks amid flowers the most attractive to the sight, and is often unthought of until its sharpness is felt. But to guard against it, does not require any stoical frigidness of manner, much less a suspicious, repulsive deportment towards any. One need not feel by any means as if he were an object of pursuit, or a prize for which every bait is set. He has only to preserve undimmed his own modesty and refinement; to maintain, in all his intercourse with female society, such a general politeness as will be acceptable to all, while it can be considered particular to none. Nor will this deprive him of the better pleasures of select intercourse with those with whom he may desire it. It is, in truth, very easy, if he will be honest in obeying the dictates of his conscience, to avoid such marked attentions as will give unintended impressions, or commit him even to those most watchful for advantage over him.

There is one mode of judging and of testing your

own behavior towards young ladies, and also theirs towards yourself, — a mode which will not fail you when thoughtfully and deliberately applied, and which is also prompt and right in its application in proportion to the purity of your own perceptions. It is this : You are blessed with sisters (and even in this view alone they are great blessings) : whatever, then, in the deportment of your sisters towards young men you could not approve, surely you cannot approve, or be flattered with, in any young lady towards yourself or other young men. And still more especially do I beg you to remember, that any deportment, in any way, in any place, be it private or public, which you would not approve in any young man towards your sister, can never be allowable in yourself towards any other young lady. This is a rule, my dear son, which, if duly impressed upon your mind, and acting upon your (I trust in God) yet uncontaminated purity of heart and taste, and unseared conscience, will preserve you from many temptations ; temptations especially to those minor steps, those half-sins I may call them, which are the usual beginnings, but rarely the ending, of a young man's progress in evil. You, I trust, dearly love and respect your sisters. Cherish that love and that respect, as you feel yourself to be their natural guardian, protector, and counsellor. God has constituted this the office of a brother, and it is fully as much for the happiness and improvement of the brother as of the sister. Soon, God only knows how soon, your father's arm may be

withdrawn from its feeble guardianship of their and your peace and happiness. You, then, must be their chief earthly stay. May our common Father in heaven so unite your hearts in true brotherly and sisterly love, that you may ever live as helpers of each other's virtue and happiness!

In the remarks which I have made hitherto, I have had most reference to the influence of others upon you. I would also impress upon your mind the importance of your influence on others, and your responsibility in regard to this influence. I allude not now to that general influence which we often talk about, but your influence in your intercourse with young ladies. You and I have more than once united in our condemnation of the character of a male coquette, when such a thing has happened to present itself in full deformity before us. But there are many grades, or shades, of this character, which exhibit themselves before the full-grown, cold-blooded monster is developed. Indeed, very seldom does one of these full-grown creatures admit himself to be what he really is. He pretends to be innocent of all intention to deceive; speaks of the hardship which it is that he cannot show any little attentions without being considered particular; that his mere politeness, or playfulness, or benevolence is construed into a meaning which he never thought of. Oh, no! he "meant nothing," and was wholly unconscious that any thing in his manner could be misinterpreted. Now, although it may, and sometimes does, happen that such unjust misconstructions occur, and

also, what is worse, that they are pretended on the side of the female, yet I affirm that a young man of common sense and common acquaintance with young society, who will consult his own thoughts and his conscience, will find no difficulty in marking the line which distinguishes the attentions of simple social politeness or friendship from any thing else. He who endeavors to go further to attract attention to himself than belongs to a cheerful, kindly friendship, will have reason sooner or later to repent of his conduct, whether it arises from mere vanity and thoughtlessness, or from a less pardonable cause.

Perhaps these warnings may appear to you premature and unnecessary. I know they would be so esteemed by many parents; but I have ever endeavored to treat you, my son, as one whose mind was above, rather than behind, your years. I feel desirous, very much so, that you should have all the advantages and enjoyments of society suitable to your age and circumstances. I know the refining and purifying influence of pure and cultivated female society, and such I am especially anxious that you should desire and obtain. Too young you are, and I hope will long feel yourself, to think upon some of the most serious things of life; but you cannot be too young to be in the habit of viewing every thing in a religious point of view, and as affecting your whole future destiny. You cannot begin too young to arm yourself against the very dawnings of sentiments, the most distant steps of indulgence in thought, word, or deed, which may

lead on to the death of the happiness of your better man,—of your soul.

I have many other things and subjects upon which I want to talk to you ; but perhaps you will think this letter long enough for one. May Heaven bless you !

TO A FRIEND ON THE DEATH OF HER FATHER.

PORTSMOUTH, May 14, 1844.

I fear, my dear friend, that you have thought me negligent of you in this hour of your sorrow ; but be assured it is not want of most kindly remembrance which has prevented my writing. Ever since I have heard of your loss, I have been uncommonly hurried, not only in business-matters, but in the offices of domestic and social duty. We have daily spoken of you ; and poor ——— has felt anew the deprivation of her lameness, in not being able to use her pen to sympathize with you.

The good old man, then, in the ripeness of his age, in the trusting faith of his heart, has been called home. He has gone to behold the Redeemer whom he loved, and to bow in the presence of the God whom on earth he adored. He has gone to no strange place. Inconceivable to the heart of man as the joys of heaven may be in degree, they are not unfamiliar, in their character, to the heart of the Christian. Must they not spring from love to God, to God's creatures ? And does not the Christian's heart here on earth feel the dawnings of that

love? The society of the true followers of his own Master, the union of spirit between the sincere worshippers of God, is the most delightful of earth's joys to the Christian; and will not that society and that union be among the very chiefest of heaven's joys? If the heart of the Christian has delighted to dwell where "its treasures" were, will it not find itself at home when it surveys those treasures with unclouded eyes? He has not gone to a strange place. During the long pilgrimage which he was permitted to pass on earth, how many fellow-travellers have fallen by his side, many of them near and dear to him while on earth! and, among these, many will he meet, who, although clothed in the white robes "made white in the blood of the Lamb," will recognize and greet him as welcome to the courts of his Father's house. And I trust, my friend, that you do not feel that he is in a place strange to you, where your thoughts and affections cannot follow him. Nothing so much opens heaven to us as the unfolding of its portals to admit the spirit of a beloved friend; nothing so much enables us to realize the hope of future scenes as following such a spirit to its glorious home. And, as the dropping away of one earthly friend after another makes this world grow more and more desolate, how precious, how more and more precious, does this hope become to our souls! Thanks be to God that he has sent his dearly beloved Son to reveal such a hope to us; and thanks be to him who was willing to take flesh, and suffer and die to confirm this blessed hope to his followers!

We have received no particulars but those which the public papers contained of the mode of departure of your venerable parent. You told me, when I saw you so transiently in the station-house, of his illness; but, from that, I understood —, he had wholly recovered. The suddenness of this event, however appalling at first, must meet your acquiescence, when you reflect how entirely easy it was to him who has gone, and how long and how fully he was prepared for it. . . .

Do, dear —, write us when you feel able, and let us know all about yourself; and believe us all most sincerely and affectionately your friends.

TO A FRIEND IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF PECULIAR TRIAL.

PORTSMOUTH, Aug. 4, 1844.

You and yours have been very much in my mind to-day, as you may well suppose. I have wanted to be at your side; for I felt as if I might comfort you, while I might also restrain and thereby strengthen you. You will, I know, take any advice kindly from me; and I will say to you, that you will find one of your hardest struggles in learning to confine your feelings to the necessary bounds to enable you to discharge aright the common business of life. Yet this you must do for your own and your family's comfort and welfare. You have naturally a great yearning for sympathy; and, when your own soul is full, be it of sorrow or of joy, you long to pour it out into others' hearts. But you know

too well the seeming want of feeling in the world. It is but in few bosoms that you will find the warm responses which you desire ; and one of your hardest lessons must be to learn to do without this communion, except within the limited circle where it may be found. The selfish world grows weary and discontented at hearing of another's doings or trials, and joys also ; and they will avoid or shake off the man who thus taxes them. To our blessed Father in heaven, and to his compassionate Son, we can pour out our whole souls : his ear is never weary of the cries and supplications of his children. Friends, too, on earth you have many, and especially the beloved and strong-minded partner of your sorrows as well as hopes and joys : on these rest your aching head, and pour out your full heart. But let the unsympathizing world see that there are both sorrows and joys, with which the stranger cannot intermeddle. Remember how He who was a man of sorrows had to endure those sorrows alone ; and yet he never was alone. Though disciples and friends did not understand him or enter into his feelings, yet the Father was with him. Your worldly affairs, my friend, will call for all your energies. Be faithful to them, as well as to all duties, and you will be supported.

I trust you will not think me unkind or unfeeling in thus writing. But I have feared, that, on your return to the city, you might feel the want of the sympathy which, of course, you met with here more readily ; and I wished to warn you against expecting it, and to urge you to self-reliance (under

God), and to manly exertion; and, moreover, not to trust to the show of sympathy, which would perhaps be like a broken reed, and make your disappointment more bitter.

I shall write you again soon. With love to your wife and all, yours affectionately.

TO A FRIEND, AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

PORTSMOUTH, Aug. 22, 1844.

— tells me that he is going home to-morrow; and I cannot let him go without a line or two from me. I wish, instead of writing, I could drop in and spend an evening with you and your wife; for I doubt not you have many an hour which a friend might enliven or relieve by leading your thoughts away from the sad to the joyful portions of your lot. For, indeed, there is so much to be joyful for in the event which has caused you so much sorrow, that, if the weakness of the flesh can be for awhile forgotten, and the spirit be assisted to rise into its full strength of faith and hope, the mouth will break forth into blessings. How much, then, is in the single thought that you have a son in heaven! Not merely the pure and spotless infant, whose little spirit had not learned to know and love you, his earthly parents, but one who had come to an age when he fully understood and felt a parent's love. Such a one now — yes, I fully believe now — remembers you, and loves you, and sympathizes with you, and prays for you in words which angels only

can utter. He feels that he is your child still ; and one of the greatest of his joys, even in heaven, is the anticipation of that hour when he shall welcome you to unite in his bliss and in his songs of praise to "Him who sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb." Saved himself from the further temptations of life, may we not hope that he is permitted to be the "good angel" of his younger brothers and sister ? If they take this event in a right manner to heart, their departed brother will be to them as a good angel. They will be able to bring holy things nearer to their hearts ; for they will feel that their dear brother now enjoys the very blessedness that they hear spoken of as the reward of the good. They will feel the ties of kindred uniting them to another world. And, as the temptations of life come about them, will they not think of him who is gone, and, as it were, hear his beloved voice whispering in their ears, "Resist manfully ; endure unto the end, and Christ will give you a crown of life ;—obey the laws of God ; maintain your purity of character ; let no unholy affections gain a hold on your heart ; and, in due time, you will be permitted to join me in these scenes of joy of which your ears cannot now hear, nor your mortal eyes see, nor your hearts now conceive" ? Yes, the influence of this dear son and brother may be more, in that he "being dead yet speaketh," than were his best efforts while in life. Let these things, among others, cheer and comfort you, my friend. . .

You will do wrong, my friend, if you allow yourself to sorrow over the ignorance which prevented

your pursuing a different course with your sick son. You did what you thought best, with the light you had. Providence saw fit to hide the danger from you; and it is no more a subject of reproach than if you had not discovered a right medicine, or any thing else which you might think would have prevented an event which you deplore. You do wrong to call such a thing a sin: it is almost a reproach to Him who ordereth all things right. Let me hope that you will banish such ideas from your mind.

I am glad to hear that your business at the store is on the increase: it will be a relief to you. Let me beg of you to remember that you are to be "faithful in all things," and "doing all things as unto the Lord, and not unto men." The labors of the body will conduce to the healing and health of the mind. Give my kind love to your wife and children. I hope — has had a pleasant time. I presume you will soon have to part with him for a season, if he continues in his profession of the sea. May Heaven bless you all!

TO A YOUNG FRIEND, ON RECEIVING A BOUQUET.

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1845.

You can hardly realize, my dear —, how my feelings were impressed on receiving your beautiful token of kind remembrance. What have I done that the young and warm heart should come out to me thus? If it is that my own heart sends up

warm and ceaseless aspirations that the purity and peace of the little child may ever be theirs amid the coming buffets of the world,—if it be that my chief joy and desire are to be a humble instrument to aid their spiritual growth,—then have I a right to rejoice, and “I will rejoice,” in these proofs of their sympathy, which come so home to my heart. But from you, my dear —, and from yours, I have always received more than I deserved of these marks of regard ; and it is that I look upon them as offerings, not to myself more than to the memory of those we have both loved, that I value them most highly. As we are thus mutually reminded of those whom we have loved, and still love, and who still love us, so will we hope that the same Christian bond will unite us all,—all, when we meet to part no more.

I cannot read all the mystic tellings of your beautiful flowers ; but I find among them abundance of “sincerity.” In that, without any flowers of rhetoric, I am not behind you in subscribing myself, most affectionately and gratefully, your friend.

TO AN EARLY AND MUCH-VALUED FRIEND.

PORTSMOUTH, March 25, 1848.

I am grateful even for the sight of your handwriting in any form ; for it recalls the past about as strongly as any thing I meet with ; and in the past I find myself, of late, living much more than

in the present. At least, it is so in all my quiet moments. While engaged in present duties or in present scenes bodily, I find no difficulty in keeping my mind also engaged and tolerably active. But in the moments of retirement,—at the morning's dawn, at the gathering of the evening's shades, in the wakeful or the dreamy hours of midnight,—the past and the passed away fill almost every thought. But it is the past as connected with the future which comes to my contemplations,—those who have gone, as those to be met again, whose images of love fill my imagination; and those of the present, however beloved and cared for, come in rather as part of that company than as by themselves. Do you understand me? and is this a right and a healthful state? I know not why I should distrust it, unless it be because it seems uncommon, and because I see so much danger in any vagary of the mind, that I almost fear to indulge any reverie, be it ever so seemingly innocent. And yet there seems to be such a holy influence beaming forth from such society, that I will not distrust it if I find myself to be still able to act in common life. As I said, your handwriting serves always to open again some of those vistas of the past through which I love so well to gaze. The scenes which I behold most frequently, link on most closely with some of my tenderest associations, beyond my own immediate family; and associations in which it is not wonderful I should most love to include you. Nevertheless, I love also to look upon you in your present; and I wish it were so that we could see

and know each other better, and unite together a good deal more in each other's present.

How often do I wish and long to have among us some one or two, at least, with ——'s active, energetic spirit, who could and would stir us up to more life and action; who would respond to those most powerful calls and appeals which we have so continually from the pulpit! Alas! why do we not hear the cry, after some of those appeals, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" But whom have we? Some of whom we ought to expect such things, and who could lead in them,—where are they? In the moon, or where they might as well be, for all present sublunary purposes. They have got up themselves, and call loudly for all to come up too; but they cannot stoop to point out the steps, much less to lend an aiding hand, to those who cannot jump to their height at once. Reform, as well as commerce, must go by steam power; and whoever leaves the great tracks, or condescends to serve as a humble cabman to bring wanderers up there-to, or who thinks it worth while to retain simple wheels for the benefit of the dwellers in by-stations, is looked down upon, or lost in the rear of the swift movers towards perfection. To go to a town-meeting from principle,—to attend a school-district meeting,—to serve on a school-committee, and, I was going to say, much more to be a prosing Sunday-school teacher to little urchins,—is far "behind the age" in some exalted minds. But I fear this is railing; so I have done with it (after I have indulged in it).

There, my dear Mrs. —, I have given you a hook to hang one letter on, if you will give me one; and believe me, with love from all our household, ever your friend.

TO A FRIEND.

January, 1851.

Thank you, my dear —, for the perusal of these letters. They are beautiful, while saddening, to the mind and heart. How true it is that we never attain so clear views of the heaven which awaits the good and the pure, as when its gates are unclosed to admit a beloved spirit, whose preparation for the scenes it opens we have witnessed at our side!

I never stood by a dying bed which had such hallowed and hallowing influences as that of your young friend —. Often have I reverted to it in memory, with a brightness of vision with which I can turn to few, very few, other scenes of my life. May her sweet spirit hover over her children here, and help all those who are striving to cultivate in themselves the same purity, humility, simplicity, and singleness of heart, that so early ripened her for Home!

You know not why you have been favored by Providence with such friends. Of "his own good will and pleasure" he allots to each of us what he chooses. To all he gives the means of a great balance of good over evil. If to some he gives more than to others, it is "of his own," and

none are wronged. And in his own eternity the lowest may surpass the highest now; and on, still on! Oh, how glorious the thought! how overwhelming the gratitude that should flow from our souls!

TO A FRIEND.

Jan. 3, 1851.

Thank you, my dear —, for your sketch of your beautiful dream. I have myself been favored with these “angel-visits” in former years, enough to know how deeply and delightfully they may impress the mind. They come to us so exceedingly few and far between, that there is little danger of their interfering with the (to us at present) more needful realities of earth. They are, I sometimes feel assured, foreglimpes, not foreshadowings, of the better country, and the better understanding of things, to which I trust we are coming. Among my most delightful anticipations of that state are the retracings we may be permitted to make of the way by which we have been led,—all clouds dispersed, all mysteries removed. Then, in how many instances shall we see the monuments of sorrow which men have erected, changed into columns garlanded with joy and gratitude,—the grave obliterated, and the parterre of flowers of paradise filling its place! Then, indeed, will death be transformed into life; for “there shall be no more death.”

I hope that you will long maintain a vivid remembrance of your “heavenly vision;” and that it

may cheer and invigorate you on your way to that land of promise, where "faith shall be turned into sight," and we shall no more need to say, "Lo! it was a dream," but all shall be glad and eternal reality. Affectionately yours.

ADDRESSES.

ADDRESSES.

AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION,
“ HOW SHALL I BECOME RELIGIOUS? ”

Address before the Society for Mutual Improvement,
Delivered Dec. 30, 1827.

It is a subject of great regret to all who feel a benevolent interest in the happiness of mankind, and who feel *that* happiness to be deeply connected with religion, that so many causes are in operation to prevent the approach of religion to the minds of men. To those who do not resolve all the difficulty which exists, into the one cause of a natural repugnance in men to the things of religion, it ought to be a matter of earnest study how the subject can be so presented as to be most likely to draw the attention of the thoughtless, to secure the regard of many who have a temporary solicitude upon the matter, and to arouse and alarm the wilful sinner.

Is it not to be apprehended that a part of the difficulty which exists in approaching some minds upon religious subjects arises from the too general and indefinite manner of thinking and speaking upon the great divisions of mankind into the good and the

bad, the religious and the irreligious, the saint and the sinner? Among a large portion of the Christian world, the language used upon this subject is sufficiently strong in showing how narrow the circle is which they draw around themselves. But it is not to the bigoted or the ignorant that the error to which I allude is confined. Is not the religious man sometimes gratified by discovering, that a person whom he has considered as wholly indifferent to religious matters has had long and serious conflicts within his own breast upon the subject? and has he not found that in some such cases the mistaken views which he has himself given have kept such a person from approaching him, and seeking the benefit of his counsel? Is there not, I would ask, too much distance, suspicion, and distrust between the professedly religious, and those who lay no claim to this character? and is not this an evil which might be prevented, if each would try to know the other better? I entirely deny that this separation is caused any more, if it is so much, by the religious part of society as by the other. While the sincere follower of Christ feels his heart warm towards all his fellow-creatures, he finds that most of those who have not, like himself, openly avowed religious sentiments, look upon him with cold reserve, shut themselves up from him, and discourage every attempt he makes to attract their confidence and friendship. He finds himself suspected of a pride which he abhors, of an exclusive spirit which he detests, and of notions upon religious subjects which never entered his imagination; and yet he

cannot be permitted to come near enough to those who thus wrong him, to open his real character.

But, besides this, is it not to be feared that there is too little discrimination among religious persons in describing character? Nothing is more true than that there is no neutral ground in religion. A man is either desirous of doing his duty, or he is not. He either loves God, or he does not. But he may never have resolved to persevere in a course of sin. He may feel that he neglects many of the commands of God, and yet would shudder to be accused of treating them with scorn and contempt. He may never have been induced to take such views of the Author of his being as would fill his heart with love towards him; but he is certain that he cannot be described as hating God, or despising his authority. And, when he hears such characters described, no conviction strikes him.

It may be very true that the time of a man's conversion may be a point. It is that moment when he says, "I will serve the Lord." But the process of mind which brought him to this decision may have been long and arduous, and his course for a long time afterwards may be wavering and unsteady, as the power of temptation, in yet unbroken strength, assaults him. But surely we should injure the cause of religion to say, that those who are struggling in almost deadly conflict with themselves and the world are to be viewed in the same light as those who never think or care for their immortal souls, or the God who gave them. We should discourage and drive back, by such a course, many

who, with a little kindness and encouragement (if they would permit us to show it), might be induced to declare themselves fully on the side of God and of religion.

But there is still another difficulty in the habits of speaking among Christians,—a want of simplicity, directness, and minuteness, in the advice they give respecting the formation of the religious character. General exhortations to become religious, or general directions for the course to be pursued, are not enough. It may be astonishing to the experienced traveller in the Christian path to find how very slight and simple are objections and difficulties which frequently obstruct the path of a beginner in religion. If he would do good to the majority of such, he must not look too deep for his causes, nor go too high for his remedies; nor must he forget that the things which are most trite and familiar to his own mind were once new to himself, and must at all times be new to multitudes who are first stepping upon the ground over which he has passed.

In every human breast there is an earnest reaching after something above and beyond any thing which human nature is found to afford; an irksome sense of deficiency, of incompleteness, of danger, which nothing but some object of religious veneration can supply; a kind of religious sense, if I may be allowed the term, which ever has existed, and ever will exist, in the human mind in every stage of cultivation; and which, where the true God is not known, will be found breaking out into every vagary

of superstition. No human being, it is believed, ever existed, possessing the common powers and faculties of man, who has not felt this necessity of some religion in a greater or less degree.

I believe that this principle is that which our Creator has originally implanted in our nature to lead us to seek after the brighter light which is ever ready to shine forth upon all who seek its rays. And while this religious sense is no more virtue or holiness than possessing the organs of speech is the power of eloquence, yet its existence is proof that the Father of our spirits not only has given man a nature capable of becoming virtuous and holy, but has originally given him an incentive to seek for this highest end of his creation, which urges him perpetually to desire a station in the moral world above that which he now occupies. It is upon this sentiment, rather than upon the reasoning powers, or even the moral sense of men, that the appeals from God's works, his providence, his word, first strike, as sounds fall upon the ear, and light upon the eye. It is through this channel of access to the mind that we see so much effect produced upon men whose reasoning powers are the most obtuse, and produced, too, by men the least capable of wielding the power of argument, or of overcoming the feeblest opposition of reason. "Men, brethren! what shall we do?" is the inquiry. Alas that there is not always a Peter to give the answer!

In a Christian land, where the beams of the gospel are conveyed through the medium of early education, and are continued upon the mind and

conscience by so many invaluable institutions, a reference to this original principle of our nature is not often thought of; but multitudes are always living, even amid the full splendor of the Sun of Righteousness, whose minds seem, as it were, so inured to the brightness, that it shines as uselessly to them as it does to the heathen or the savage. But to these, to all these, the moments of solicitude do and will come; and, although one may not know from whence it comes, the voice will fall upon the soul like the call to our first parent,—“Where art thou?”

If at any time this call has produced so much attention as to prompt the inquiry, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” it is of unspeakable importance that such an answer be presented as will fix the ties of religion so strongly about the mind that it may not be driven off, and leave less hope than ever of recovering it to serious reflection. Then it is that the friend of truth feels the deepest solicitude to have pure religion presented to the mind of the inquirer. I would not even ask a confirmed Christian, one who manifested in his life the spirit and love of Christ, whether he believed in the dogmas of Calvin or in the teachings of Arminius; but I feel a most earnest desire to have the unperverted truths of the Bible presented to the young and opening mind, or to the new inquirer, because I believe them incomparably more sure of fixing him securely in the love and power of Christianity. If, at such a moment, religion be presented in the dress with which some of its friends have invested it;

if even truth be presented, I do not say in its nakedness, but under such false lights as it always presents to some persons, — the mind of the inquirer is shocked; he feels that to go forward is impossible; he strives to throw off the new convictions. Should he succeed, and become again thoughtless, the hideous image which has been held before him, under her name, rises to his imagination, whenever the subject of religion recurs; and he shrinks from it, not having courage himself to lift the veil, and see how much of what he beholds is but the absurd production of human invention.

It is often the case also, that, from the false representations which are given of the nature of religion, many of the young especially, who may, in truth, have long felt a respect, and a kind of regard, for religion, are led to think that they have no part nor lot in the matter. They hear it spoken of as some strange, mysterious thing, of which they can form no conception until a certain process has been effected upon the mind different from any thing in its usual operations. You cannot convince them that a man is religious, if he truly strives to know and love and obey God, and to take Jesus Christ as his Guide and Saviour. You cannot convince them that the chief end of the coming of Jesus Christ was to make men good. This is too simple, too common-place. Do we not often hear such language as this? — “You urge me to become religious, and I am desirous of so doing. I hear frequently, from various sources, the most earnest exhortations to become so; my conscience

tells me that it is necessary for my own peace to become so. I often find myself considered as despising religion, as holding its sanctions in contempt, because I do not declare myself openly as its friend. This is not my case. I do not despise it, nor do I feel any thing like contempt towards it. But, although I know that I am not a religious person, and acknowledge that I ought to be so, I find myself unable to set about the work of becoming so. I oftener hear exhortations to the duty than directions how to commence this important concern; and, when directions are offered, they are not such as seem to me practicable; and they are not unfrequently at variance one with another. Looking forward, with the hope of meeting with a plainer path, I feel myself subject to the dangers of delay, and am rendered unhappy and restless in every moment of reflection. How shall I become religious?"

I have no hesitation in saying, that I believe the main difficulty of many who use this language is too often the want of a real and fixed disposition to become religious; that the feeling which they mistake for this disposition is only that irksome sense of danger and of deficiency to which I have before alluded, as existing in every breast when unacquainted with religion in an experimental manner. Be it so or not, it is almost universally the case that the inquirer begins the conversation by stating what he would believe are excuses for his delay to begin the religious course. His first observations are upon the divisions in the religious world.

He will detail to you a list of doctrines which he has heard proposed as Christianity; although often, if he would be honest, he would confess that he never believed them to be Christianity. He will tell you of total depravity and of election, and gravely ask you, if these doctrines be true, what he has to do, and what he can do, for himself. I should briefly answer, "If these doctrines be true, you can do nothing; but these doctrines you never found in the Bible." He will tell you of the special influences of the spirit, which he has heard must come upon him before he can even think a good thought. I would ask him whether he is sensible of any special influence of the spirit which led him to put the question he has asked to me or to himself. Has he any sincere desire for a true answer to that question? If so, he need wait for no other kind of influence to lead him safely on in the right path. He will tell you of his having lived an honest and decent life, doing right and avoiding wrong, as far as he knew how. I would ask him, if this is true, why he is uneasy, and why he now seeks for further information. "Have you done right, and avoided wrong, as far as you knew how? Do no neglected duties arise in your mind? To name but a few: Have you uniformly exerted your influence to promote the happiness of those about you? Have you done to others as you would that they should do to you? Have you earnestly sought in that Book which professes to teach the will of God, what steps you must take to do that will? Have you been in the practice of frequent prayer and self-

examination? Or, if you think these are duties of too refined a nature, say if, in your daily business, you are conscious of a steady and uniform uprightness of character. In the government of your passions, have you sought to maintain purity, kindness, and benevolence of feeling? Have you done in secret only what you would be willing should meet the light of day? If not, can you say that you have done right as far as you knew how? Can you say that you did not know and acknowledge these to be duties? Have you not received a bountiful supply of the daily blessings of life? Have you not been protected in danger, and relieved in distress, without lifting one offering of gratitude to Him whom you knew to be the giver of all these mercies? or, at best, have you not been content to make a selfish use of these favors; only returning, now and then, a vague thought of what you called thankfulness? Have you never abused and debased your powers, given unholy license to your passions, sought and indulged in polluting pleasures, and run into temptation, instead of resisting or flying from it? In the common business of life, have you never taken advantage of ignorance or credulity, and conducted yourself in a manner which you would resent if used towards yourself? If you have done thus, can you say that you have avoided wrong as much as was in your power? And, in your course, has there been no practical contempt of the divine law? Is there any great difference between saying that you despise the laws of God, and in silence treating them with neglect?"

But no ! in a moment of honest candor, you will tell me that you have not done all you could.

But you will tell me of the weakness of your nature, the strength of temptation. Here it is that I would meet you. Here it is that religion comes forth to meet you, and extends her hand to receive you. Abandon your false pleas and excuses and evasions ; dare to look at yourself as you are ; confess that you are guilty, and that you find all your subterfuges vain ; lay yourself open to conviction, and then you are ready for the first lesson of religion, — the first word of Christ in his teachings, — *Repent.*

The language of religion to you is that of a sincere and ardent friend. She will tell you, with all frankness, that you have not been all that you knew how to be ; that you have not acted up to the light which has always been within you. She will tell you that the reason why you have not resisted temptation more successfully is because you have rather wished to parry than to conquer ; rather wished that you could remove the danger of the transgression than avoid its commission ; that you “ have rolled sin as a sweet morsel under your tongue.” She will tell you, that, had you earlier sought her assistance, the light she would have thrown around you would have saved you many a difficulty, by enabling you to see that what you took for pleasures were vain and treacherous illusions ; and that the ways of virtue are alone truly happy. But she will assure you that it is not yet too late. Although indulgence has

strengthened the bonds of folly and of sin, so that now you will have much to unlearn as well as to learn,—to break the trammels of habit, where before you would only have had to make a choice,—still it is not too late. The grace which calls you to repentance will be sufficient to break your fetters, and conquer all your enemies.

I have said that the first lesson of religion is repentance. To my mind, there is no mystery about this first duty. I know that it has been, like every other simple doctrine of Christianity, wrapped up in difficult definitions and technical phrases. Suppose yourself walking in a path which you find rugged and dangerous; having left, to enter upon this, a way which, though narrow and strait, was plain and secure. Suppose that, becoming entangled in difficulties, and alarmed at the dangers which you find surrounding you, you stop to reflect upon your situation; you feel convinced that you have taken a wrong path, and resolve to retrace your steps, and enter upon the way which you at first avoided. While struggling to free yourself from your present embarrassments, and to regain your lost situation, you recollect that a kind and benevolent friend assured you that the course you took would result as it has done, and urged you to take the other path, offering you every assistance you could need. Suppose, too, that even while perversely advancing on this dangerous way, you had heard his voice behind you, still calling on you to turn; and that, at this moment, you behold him beckoning to you and stretching out

his hand to aid you to gain a place of safety. If you can place yourself thus in imagination, it appears to me that you may have a very clear conception of the situation of him who hears and attends to the invitation of the gospel to repentance. Let your motives for choosing the wrong path have been more or less criminal,—let it have been more from folly and thoughtlessness than from perverseness,—yet, whenever you resolve to return, and begin an opposite course to that you have been treading, you certainly repent. If you only regret and lament the choice you have made, while you still go on, or only stand still, this is not repentance. It is sorrow, and may become that godly sorrow which worketh repentance ; but it is not repentance now. The more guilt there has been in your reasons for choosing the wrong path, and the further you have walked in it, the keener will, of course, be your suffering from reflection ; and the more deep should be your adoration of that mercy which has called you to repentance, and is offering again to receive and pardon you.

But should the person whom I am addressing say to me, “ Thus far have I gone ; I am sensible that I am in a wrong way ; I wish and am laboring to return : but I find the difficulties too powerful for me ; my good resolutions continually fail me ; I fall back, and, before I am aware, I find myself again in the toils of sin ; I am disgusted with myself, and feel ready to give up in despair,” — I would then ask, have you not again set out without asking the assistance of the kind friend who would

at first have set you forward in the right direction? His help is even more necessary to you now than before; for you have heaped up obstacles in your own way. We are dependent upon God to guide and support us in all situations. We are free agents; but he has made us so. We have the power to choose good or evil. If we choose the good, we dedicate ourselves to him, and he will enable us to do all his will. But we cannot be good of our own selves. Our powers are too feeble, too incomplete. If we set out on our own account, if I may so speak, to be good, we at once prove ourselves perverse: we give not God the glory. Without his help, we shall find all our efforts and all our good resolutions against the temptations we meet with, "like the spider's web in the path of the elephant." God has made man independent (if this term be not too strong) only in the power to choose. This all may do,—all can do; and, having chosen right, the first step is to go to God for guidance and for help.

But I wish here to guard even more strongly against the aspersion so often thrown out against those who maintain the true free agency of man, that we "claim the merit of our salvation to ourselves." God, we are told, "works in us to will and to do." This we admit equally with others. He continually works in us. Of his goodness it is that we exist from one moment to another as rational beings. All that we have he has given us; and, because we say that we can exert the powers which he has given us, do we detract from

his glory, or say that our own hands have wrought our salvation? But we do not say that the first endowment of our faculties is all that God has done for us. We believe that there is an influence from God constantly operating to call us to repentance and a holy life. Others say that an especial influence is necessary; by which they mean that an occasional exertion is made by the Almighty to arouse us to duty. Now, I would ask, which most exalts the mercy and goodness of God, to say that he only occasionally operates upon our minds to induce us to turn from the evil and choose the right way; or to say that his spirit is continually striving with us to bring us to repentance, and to help us to obey his law? And is not this a simple and true statement of the question, stripped of all its subtleties?

I have now pointed out the first steps to be taken by any one who really wishes to become religious, — a faithful self-examination, which will show him the deep necessity there is for repentance; and then an earnest and entire dedication of himself to God in prayer for his help and guidance. Before proceeding any further, I would carefully guard against the impression that these steps are to be taken in a moment. It is not one just view of our characters that will impress upon our hearts our guilt and danger. It is not one feverish appeal to God for mercy and pardon which will confirm our safety. The cares of the world, or its pleasures, will soon spring up and choke this good seed, if it be not watched over and nourished by a persevering and

habitual course of the same duties. The exercise of self-examination, of prayer, and of watchfulness, will be imperfectly performed, and be found extremely irksome at first. Strong temptation will arise to neglect and abandon them. Long will it be necessary to perform them, at times, almost mechanically; but they must be performed, even thus. It will not do to trust to the coming of a favorable moment of feeling. Your thoughts may wander; but again and again bring them back. If you gain one moment of devout feeling, you gain a reward and a satisfaction which will be increased by every new attempt. Fall not into the error that repentance is a work by itself; that it may be once performed, and it is over. While life lasts, human frailty will render the work of repentance a perpetual work. Never can self-examination be faithful, without showing new ground for repentance. The truly pious man is a continual penitent. No view is more false than that which makes repentance only one act, one effort, and then leaves the soul safe for ever after.

It may have been expected that I should before this have given an exhortation to the perusal of the Holy Scriptures. Had the person whom I suppose myself addressing never seen the Bible, I might have offered it to him in silence at the first moment of his appeal to me. Were the reading of the Bible, in a proper manner, more common, many of the difficulties which I have lamented at the commencement of these remarks would not exist. But I believe that the want of influence from this holy

book among us arises, not so much from ignorance of its contents, as from the manner in which it is read. It is rare to meet with a person sprung from reputable New England parents, who has not, even in early life, a certain kind of knowledge of the Bible. But how is this knowledge acquired, and to what does it amount? Many of us remember when the Bible was almost the only school-book for the reading of the higher classes in our public schools; and in many of our minds are there not associated strange mixtures of ideas with its measured chapters and verses,—associations which have very little to do with religious instruction? I am by no means prepared to exclude the Bible from schools; but it is to the strange perversion of its design, in making it a task-book, and to the equally strange manner in which it is often read to and by children in families, that is to be attributed the fact that no book is ever read with so few conceptions of its real character, and so few thoughts consistent with its real design. And to the same causes is to be attributed, in many cases, the neglect of it in after-life. When the dull business of mere learning to read is not all that has been attended to, how often is it that the commentaries of many a worthy teacher have led the young person to believe his catechism to be of superior authority to his Bible! and, whenever he has found any discrepancy in their teachings, he has been required to bow to the catechism, which he was taught before he could read, and to leave the Bible until he could understand it in conformity thereto.

To the Bible, however, I would immediately lead all who would know the words of eternal life. I would ask only that it be taken up without any expectation of a magical influence from its touch, or of its producing a supernatural effect upon the mind without the aid of any other means of grace which God has given us. The Bible is not a systematic arrangement of rules, by which every step of our progress in the religious life is pointed out in so many words. It is a book, containing in various forms a revelation of the mind and will of God. It is to be read, not with an expectation that the mere process of reading will produce any effect, but with a view to discover what the will of God is, and with a fixed determination to obey it when discovered. And for this purpose the understanding which God has given us, and to which the Bible is addressed, must be brought into full action.

Thus to read the sacred volume is one of the earliest duties of him who would know what he must do to become religious. And do not its earliest teachings accord with the advice which I have given? What are the first words of John, who was the forerunner of the Teacher sent from God? "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching and saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, Bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

What were the first words of instruction which fell from the blessed Saviour at his entrance upon his ministry? "From that time, Jesus began to preach

and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What is the general tenor of the Gospels? Of what does the longest connected discourse of our Saviour, which is given by the four evangelists, consist? Is it of subtle definitions of the nature of God and of man? of elaborate accounts of how and when mankind became sinners? of acute disquisitions upon the exact part which is attributable to the will of man, and to special divine influence in bringing man to salvation? "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Let the inquirer after religion, then, take the Bible with a desire to learn what it teaches, not to ascertain whether this or that set of opinions is nearest to or furthest from the truth; let him take it with a resolution to practise every lesson as soon as learnt; and, with this guide alone, he will not have long to delay commencing the Christian course. Read to learn your duty, and learn to practise, and the Bible will indeed be a lamp to your feet and a guide to your path.

I might now go on to urge the diligent use of those different and invaluable privileges with which we are favored, especially the sacred observance of the sabbath, the attendance upon the public ministrations of the gospel, the reading of practical religious books, and practical religious conversation. But it is not possible to detail here much of that advice which every sincere inquirer would be glad

to receive from the voice of Christian friendship. Neither did I intend to describe all the traits which distinguish the Christian character, or to point out the mistakes into which multitudes fall as to its distinguishing marks. My design has been rather to show how the religious course might and should be commenced. And does any one say, in reply to what I have recommended, "All this I have done"? To such a one I will venture to give the assurance that he is religious; and if he will follow on in the course upon which he has entered, if he will practise what he knows, and press forward to know more that he may practise more, he need fear none of the alarms which the ignorant, though often well-meaning, religionist will endeavor to throw around him. He will hear much of terms, which, though simple in themselves, have assumed a dark and distorted appearance from his hearing them used in an uncommon sense, or in no sense at all. He will hear of faith, which he will be told means something more than believing the gospel, both theoretically and practically. He will be told of a righteousness to be imputed to him, which has no concern with his own heart or practice. He will hear of a price paid for the purchase of that grace which a merciful God sent his own Son to offer freely to all who will accept of its conditions. These and a thousand other doctrines will be urged upon him from every quarter, with the appalling declaration that whosoever believeth not shall be condemned. But let not his heart be troubled: he believes in God, let him believe also in Jesus Christ, and trust

his guidance, unassisted by erring man. And let him be assured, that, if he gives up himself to him, he will present him faultless before the throne of his Father at last. Nor let any one think that what has been recommended is trifling, or of easy performance. It would be a much easier thing to be a Christian, if only a fancied belief in the strangest doctrines, or the performance of the hardest penances, could purchase the name. And this is the reason why men have ever striven to satisfy themselves with every thing but doing the will of God. But nothing else will answer. "Ye are my disciples," saith our Saviour, "if ye do whatsoever I command you."

I had here closed the remarks which I proposed to offer you this evening, when it occurred to me that I should offer them to you on the evening of the last sabbath of the year.

We have arrived, gentlemen, at another of those stage-houses of time, when, although we cannot stop even for a moment, we are induced to cast an eye back upon the road we have passed over, and forward to that upon which we are entering. The former lies open to our review; but the latter is involved in impenetrable obscurity. To this spot we have been brought in safety; but of our next step we know absolutely nothing. What hand has brought us hither? To what guide shall we now commit ourselves? If we have hitherto done so, is it safe to neglect for another year an inquiry like that which has been the subject of our thoughts this evening?

My friends, I stand not here in the character or with the authority of a messenger from God ; but the warnings of his ministers have this day been uttered ; and the voice that comes from the months of the year which is now fast hastening to its close, speaks to us all with a power that is given to no human tongue. Shall that voice be swept away with the midnight breeze which closes another short period of our existence ? or shall it speak the language of salutary warning and of peace to our souls ? Who among us can make a league with death and the grave for the coming year ? Can we place our eye upon that individual of our number who we are sure will hail the next anniversary of this day ? Can we say what individual of our number shall next bow to the king of terrors ?

“ Could I, from Heaven inspired, as sure presage
To whom the rising year shall prove his last,
As I can number in my memory’s page
And item down the victims of the past, —

“ How each would trembling wait the mournful sheet,
On which the press might stamp him next to die ;
And, reading here his sentence, how replete
With anxious meaning, heavenward turn his eye !

“ Then, doubtless many a trifer on the brink
Of this world’s hazardous and headlong shore,
Forced to a pause, would feel it good to think, —
Told that his setting sun must rise no more.

“ Ah, self-deceived ! could I prophetic say
Who next is fated, and who next should fall,
The rest might then seem privileged to play ;
But, naming none, the voice now speaks to all.”

THE

NECESSITY OF A POSITIVE REVELATION.

Address before the Society for Mutual Improvement,

Delivered March 6, 1836.

If ever there is a time when the heart of the humble Christian overflows with gratitude for the high calling wherewith he is called; if ever there is a time when the lowly follower of Jesus feels that he is exalted,—it is when he sees the wearied pinions of human reason fluttering amid the clouds which it may not pass; it is when he sees the profoundest human intellect baffled in attempting to fathom depths which are covered by the ocean of eternity, and to send its telescopic researches into regions where the eye of faith alone can penetrate. It is then that he finds that, great as is the gift of reason, wonderful, and still unfathomed, as are its powers, it is not, if alone, the greatest gift of God to man; and he rejoices, that, while the powers of reason and the means of its development are unequally meted out to men, there is another gift, in the full advantages of which all may participate in entire equality,—the equality of perfect fulness. The poor cottager, whose time and labor are all consumed in providing for the wants of the body, leaving the mental powers an almost uncultivated

waste, may feel abashed in the presence of a mind which, "in thoughts more elevate, can reason high;" but, when holding sweet converse with a fellow-christian, and resting his hand upon the book of God, he feels himself upon level ground with his companion, can enjoy an assurance in their common faith, surpassing what the acutest reasoner can feel in his own deductions, and can say even to his spiritual teacher, "I believe not because of thy saying; for I have heard for myself, and do know that these blessed truths are not the deductions of man's fallible reason; not a system which the wise men of to-day have reared up, and which the wiser men of to-morrow may overthrow, but a revelation from God; that they rest not upon the shifting sands of human science, but have for their basis the rock planted by the very hand of the Deity, and are sanctioned by the voice which once spake from the fire and the smoke of Sinai."

Yes, it is a revelation from God, and that alone, which can give to the whole race of men a cornerstone, elect, precious, upon which he that resteth shall not be confounded. Such a revelation may become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence not only to such as are disobedient, but to such as think that human powers are of sufficient magnitude to discover and to grapple with all truth, and to remove every veil which hangs before its mysteries. But to them who believe it is indeed precious, more precious than all the reasonings of Greeks or Jews, of men or angels. On it they will fix their hold, as that which alone is immovable

amid the mutations of all human affairs and human opinions. They will guard, with anxious caution, against every influence which would loosen their minds from this hold ; for, if once lost, the chaos of human speculations opens before them ; the mind beholds, in long array, the conflicting systems which have risen and fallen ; and, after wandering through these wrecks of the ages, finding no rest, at length it

“ Meets a vast vacuity ; all unawares,
Fluttering its pinions vain, plumb down it falls
Ten thousand fathoms deep,”

and in the black ocean of infidelity or skepticism is lost for ever.

That it is the tendency of much of the theological writing and preaching of the present day thus to loosen men's minds from the belief of an absolute revelation from God, I am painfully apprehensive, — a revelation, I mean, in its usual and literal sense, — a positive communication from God to man of facts, truths, and commands ; a revelation having for its foundation an unequivocal “ Thus saith the Lord,” and standing in its severe simplicity, however surrounded by the fabrics of beauty or deformity erected by the hands of fallible men.

The danger to which I allude now is not from the assaults of the wicked, the ignorant, the conceited revilers of divine truth, who rise and fall as the scum of the troubled sea, when its waters cast up mire and dirt. The attacks of such as these partake too largely of the pollution of their fountains to have much effect, except upon minds

already imbued with the same corruption. The arguments of these men, if arguments they may be called, are addressed to the basest lusts and passions of their race. To resist or overcome their power, it is first necessary to awaken some degree of moral sense within the breasts of their victims,—to start from its fatal slumber that innate principle of religion which is implanted in every human soul. If this can be done,—if one can be induced to let his own mind operate freely,—the danger is chiefly over. It is only by constant and forcible opposition to the dictates of their very nature, that men can be brought to say, even in their hearts, There is no God. The utmost that they can do at last is to feel the wish, and to deafen their own ears with the reiterated exclamation, of the fool, “No God! no God!”

The apprehension which I would express is, that it is the tendency of the method of discussing theological subjects in the present age to lead men to deny that any revelation has been made; to show that all our faith rests upon human authority; and thus to make it easy for mankind to throw off the yoke of this authority, feeling that it is no sacrilege, no impiety, to deny claims which are set up only by men like themselves, and resting only upon reason, which all possess.

This tendency is perceptible in attempts to magnify the powers with which man was originally invested by his Creator, so as to show that a direct positive revelation is unnecessary; that to suppose such a necessity would be to admit a deficiency in

man as at first created, which impeaches the wisdom or goodness of his Creator ; or, if there is no such deficiency, that a revelation supposes a redundancy of means not found elsewhere in the works or government of God. But while the fact of a positive revelation is thus denied, the want of its authority is felt, and an attempt is made to supply it by proving that the results of a right use of men's original powers are as valuable and as binding upon the conscience as could be the words of a direct communication from God ; that they are, to all intents and purposes, a revelation in themselves, being the legitimate production of powers and faculties bestowed by God upon man at his first creation, in order to be a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. And the learned labor of volumes is expended in showing that all which the supposed revelations of the Bible contain is but the production of man's natural powers, in the right use of those powers ; bright instances of their sufficiency, it is true, but still that it is all from man.

For instance, it has been believed from the generations of old, and is believed now by the mass of civilized men, that there was a direct, literal, original revelation, that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The time, manner, and medium of this revelation have been, and may continue to be, matters of inquiry. We are not told what was the scenery, the drapery, or the audience to the first glorious opening of this all-important fact. Was it to the earliest human pupils of the All-wise ? — did it come to Adam

and our first mother, when, as walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they heard the voice of the Lord God? Or was it at some later period, and with like solemn array of divine magnificence as when Sinai "quaked greatly because the Lord descended thereon," and God spake therefrom with a voice? Was the annunciation that there is one God, the Maker of heaven and of earth, left in its simple grandeur? and are the details given in the sacred book but the additions of human imagination glowing with the sublimity of the truth it had received? All this may be matter of investigation and inquiry, and still the belief that the great truth was derived from revelation may be unimpaired. And such seems to have been the universal faith of man wherever the light of Scripture has shone. But now we are told that there is no need of such revelation; that man possesses such powers of reason and thought, that, on the survey of the wonderful world around him, he could and would come to the conclusion that the heavens and the earth were made by an infinite Being,—and that Being he calls God.

Moreover, it would seem that this great fundamental truth did not require a very high degree of cultivation of the human intellect for its discovery. For we are told by a distinguished scholar among the new expounders of Scripture, that "the account of the origin of the world, as we have it in the first chapters of Genesis, is to be looked upon as a poetical fragment of oriental composition, designed to represent the conceptions of an early age with

regard to the origin of the universe, and that the key to its meaning is to be found in the impressions made by external nature upon the mind of an eastern poet, in the first rude stages of civilization and philosophy." "The first rude stages"! O rudeness beyond all after-cultivation! O weakness of intellect beyond all after-wisdom!

Now, suppose it had been believed by the Jews, that, instead of being a direct and positive revelation from the Creator, or instead of being grounded upon such a revelation, all this part of the writings of their great Prophet and Lawgiver was merely "a beautiful fragment of ancient song;" or, to use the words of a still more recent writer, that it was merely the developing of "a thought which springs up spontaneously in every holy heart," — what would have been the effect of such a belief upon that nation? Should we have had so many succeeding prophets and teachers, sages and poets, of Israel; all, with unquestioning acquiescence, acknowledging the God who made the heavens and the earth, who "stretched out the heavens like a curtain, and laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be moved"? Should we not, instead of these, or, at least, largely mixed with them, have found learned disquisitions in support of the old poet, and to show that his "early impressions" were probably true; or, peradventure, some attempts to bring forward another, perhaps a more rational, theory? Doubtless it would have been thus. And upon the bulk of mankind now, although so much has been done to enlighten and expand the human

intellect, if the great truth that there is a God, the Creator and Governor of all things, were left to rest upon, I say not the flights of a poetic imagination, but the acutest arguments of human reason, would not the effect be immeasurably to increase skepticism and infidelity among those who care not to believe, and to throw back into a chaos of uncertainty even the humble-minded and sincere seeker after truth? Ought it not, then, to be the wish of the real friends of man,—is it not the duty of the great minds of our day, to direct their efforts to confirm and strengthen, rather than weaken, the belief of a revelation; which they must see, I think, if they look upon the subject with the humility belonging to fallible man, is absolutely needed by the human heart to give it the assurance of hope?

But it may be asserted, that there are very few among writers of any repute who absolutely deny the fact of a revelation. This may be true; but I fear that, while this fact is ostensibly admitted, much is done to destroy the reverence which is due to a revelation as such; that, while men think they are only stripping revelation of the mists which superstition has raised around it, and making its light more clear, they are, in fact, sapping the foundations of the faith of mankind.

We are told that “it is time that the science of theology was taken from the hands of cowards and charlatans;” that it is to be treated as having “no extrinsic claim to consideration;” that we are to approach it fearlessly,—fearlessly, not only of party shackles, sectarian prejudices, and the denunciations

of men, but also fearless of Him who, as the Fountain of truth, commands us to investigate truth whenever he commands us to seek him. We are told, indeed, that we must come to the investigation "with calmness, without prejudice, in the spirit of reverence for truth and for humanity,—not with the flippancy and conceit which are often displayed by pretenders to knowledge."

Now, what I apprehend is, that the qualifications and reservations usually accompanying such advice as this come too late, and come in vain. Tell a young and ardent man, just beginning to feel the stirrings of mental activity, or the ever numerous class who are not among those that "drink deep" at wisdom's fount, that "the science of theology possesses no extrinsic claims to reverence,"—that it has long been in the hands of cowards and charlatans,—that it is the duty of "competent men" to take it into their hands, untrammelled by any disposition to "hush up or gloss over the weak points of any system,"—that he must despise the servile and abject spirit which hesitates to enter courageously upon the examination of truth, which never fears the boldest investigation,—and it will be too late to add our cautions that he be not flippant and conceited; that he be calm, dispassionate, and unprejudiced. Will he modestly apprehend that he is not one of the "competent men"? Will he feel any doubts that he shall avoid flippancy and conceit? Tell him not to fear man, nor even God, if his object be the discovery of truth, and will he not go on fearlessly

indeed ? for is not he seeking truth ? And let the ignorant, but pious Christian, who has never opened his Bible but

“With solemn air,
And bonnet reverently laid aside,”

hear such exhortations as these, and see their effects : if he be not induced to shut his eyes and ears, even to truth itself thus rudely introduced, will he not be in danger of being dazzled into blindness, not by the true light, but by the glare of the torches which such watchmen hold up to show that great luminary ?

If upon the tolerably intelligent, and upon the truly pious, though ignorant, such may be the effect, what are the dangers to the giddy, the thoughtless, the wavering, who, restrained hitherto by an intuitive or hereditary awe, have looked upon the Bible as possessing at least the “extrinsic claim to consideration” of having been called for ages the word of God, a revelation from the Most High, but are now told that it should be approached and criticized only as the production of men, — inspired, it may be, but with an inspiration amounting only to the “highest energy of their natural powers,” and “entire freedom” to utter only the demonstrations of those powers ? For such is the inspiration which is admitted to have been possessed by the authors of the books which we call holy. Such are the revelations which it is allowed have been made. The fact of a revelation, it is said, is not denied. But this admission comes in so questionable a

shape, is guarded with so many exceptions, is filed down to so flimsy a texture, that it seems to me that only a remnant of that "superstition" which such writers condemn in others prevents the positive denial of it altogether. They take away the force and power of a faith in revelation, and, to my apprehension, reduce the Bible to a mere set of "fragments of oriental literature," and snatches of old songs.

Take, for instance, a few extracts from a laudatory article, in a leading periodical, upon an individual who is said "to hold a conspicuous place among the pioneers in the reform" supposed to be going on in theology and religion. "His views (says the article) on the subject of revelation, though admitting a direct communication from God, were somewhat at variance with the ideas which have usually prevailed with regard to it. He regarded every mental endowment as the gift of Divine Providence. In accordance with their natural powers, he supposed that a higher degree of light had been granted to favored individuals, by which they were made the special messengers of God to their fellow-men. The effect of the holy spirit upon their mind, he maintains, is not to impair its healthy action, but, on the contrary, to call forth its noblest powers in order and harmony. This view, according to his opinion, coincides with the sentiments of the ancient world, which always understood by divine inspiration a state of the highest mental energy, and of entire freedom. The favorite conception of modern times, however, has been of a lower character.

The subject of inspiration has been regarded as no more than the pipe of an organ, through which the wind is blown,—a mere hollow medium, deprived of his own thought and activity. A more desolate condition of human nature can hardly be conceived." Again: "The ancient writings of the Hebrew nation contain the expression of many beautiful wishes and plans for the future. Hopes of a glorious light to arise on all the people, &c. glow there like the redness of the morning." Again: "We may regard them [the prophecies] as the utterance of hopes and wishes, of a filial trust in God, and of consoling views of the future, which received their complete fulfilment in Jesus Christ. They were announced by wise and patriotic men, who spoke in the name of Jehovah as the covenant-God of their nation." "When Jesus Christ appeared, the great controversy was, whether he was the Messiah predicted in these ancient books." "Jesus of Nazareth believed the promised kingdom to be of a spiritual character," &c. The prophecies "awakened the whole soul of Christ: they strengthened him to his last breath. He saw in them the prediction of the work he commenced."

Here, then, are some of the admissions of a revelation, or of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is admitted that all mental endowments are gifts of Divine Providence: to some favored individuals — "wise and patriotic men" — greater light is given, but in entire accordance with their natural powers, and producing, it seems, only the highest energy of these natural powers; which

energy exhibits itself in the utterance of many beautiful wishes and plans and hopes for the future. These hopes and wishes are received by the Jews as predictions, uttered in the name of Jehovah, who has, probably by a similar process, been discovered to have a being, and to be the covenant God of their nation. When the Saviour appears, it is disputed whether he be the Messiah thus predicted; and different opinions prevail. But Jesus believes that they were to be fulfilled in himself. The hopes and wishes and plans of wise and patriotic men who went before him awakened in his wise and patriotic soul a desire to accomplish those "predictions," and stirred him to the work which he commenced.

Now, I would ask if the "direct communication from God," which is said by the reviewer to be here admitted, is made out to be any thing more than the gift of reason more or less liberally bestowed upon differently formed individuals. I would inquire, too, of those better able to answer, if it is true that the ancient world always understood by inspiration merely a state of high mental energy and of entire freedom. I think I have read of a different belief among some heathen nations at least; "a desolate view of human nature," it is true, but one which proves that men have always felt the want of a communication from their gods more direct than it is admitted we have; a communication which, if it come not through a positively "hollow medium," is yet uninterrupted, and unmingled with the imperfections of that medium. I

must ask if mankind in general, and especially the enlightened and learned, have, or ever have had, such confidence in the highest energies of the natural powers of themselves or others, as to bow to them as they would to a message sent and sanctioned as the revelations of the Bible have been, or are "usually" believed to have been.

For myself, if these be the admissions of a revelation made from God to man, — if these are the views of some popular theologians, of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, of him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, of him of whose life it has been happily said, that, "from what was written of him ages before his mission began, a copious and satisfying gospel, according to the prophets, might be constructed," — if such be all of revelation which they can find in the Bible, I must say, with Mary, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." They point me to an effigy of straw and of stubble, but the body is gone. They may tell me that the vital spirit dwells in this straw and stubble; but for me, I cannot say to it, "Rabboni!"

Doubtless I shall be addressed in the language of the same periodical from which I have quoted: "It is a discouraging circumstance for those who aim to establish just views of religion, or to correct a popular and long-cherished error, that so large a portion of the public are disinclined to a thorough investigation, and even incapable of forming a correct judgment of nice questions of criticism and interpretation." While I would not plead

guilty to the charge of unwillingness to have every truth thoroughly investigated, I do acknowledge myself to be — and I believe a great portion of the best Christian communities to be — “incapable of forming a correct judgment of nice questions of criticism and interpretation.” A vast majority of every Christian community are, and ever will be, from the condition of things, such as the apostle advises to be received, but “not to doubtful disputations.” And it seems to me that much of the repugnance in the public mind here complained of is not a reluctance to have truth thoroughly investigated, but only a praiseworthy caution lest the very foundations of their faith should be dug up; a salutary watchfulness over the sacred deposit intrusted to them; a fear lest, in the pride and heat of argument, the palladium of the spiritual city of refuge should be trampled and defiled under the feet of theological gladiators. Men feel, I repeat it again, the need of a “Thus saith the Lord;” and they do not fear that what is thus revealed should be investigated and understood; but they revolt from every intimation that he hath not spoken, or that what he hath spoken is so obscure as to need the skill of the augur to explain it, or a very acute perception in “nice questions of criticism and interpretation” to discover and understand it.

I confess myself among those who would rather see the cumbersome buttresses which error has built up to support the walls of truth remain untouched, than have such artillery directed against

them as will endanger the walls themselves, or expose to destruction those who have been long sheltered within them. Let these outworks be removed by such slow and careful means, that, for every inch of error thrown down, a corresponding surface of truth may be shown. Let not a busy zeal to brush away error fill with dust the eyes of the humble seekers for truth. Let not the noise and confusion of the assault distress its friends with alarm for the citadel itself.

I know that it is common to call such terrors foolish and unnecessary. I know that it is thought dishonorable to truth to say, that any investigation, or any mode of investigation, can injure or endanger it. I am as well convinced as any one, that truth is great, and that it will prevail. It is not for truth that I fear: its mountain stands strong, and will finally be established upon the tops of the mountains. But I do fear, that, unless humility and reverence be felt in searching for it; unless prudence, modesty, and discretion be employed in removing surrounding errors, those who are engaged in these important labors are in danger of weakening the confidence of men in its power and worth,—are in danger of burying themselves and thousands of others under the very rubbish which they would remove, or of raising other heaps as perilous and injurious. And from no set of errors should I fear more evil than from having men taught, that, when they seek a revelation from God, they will find only the reasonings of sages or the dreams of poets; or that, if there is a revelation, it comes in such hidden

forms as to require the expositions of sages to unriddle it.

It may be said that a great reformation is going on,—that the clouds and mists of error which have been collecting for ages cannot be dissipated without some commotion in the elements,—that it needs daring hands and fearless hearts to guide the bark amid the prevailing darkness, and that some risks must be run; yet I would sooner trust my safety to the reefed canvas and the sounding-line, than have the chance of arriving sooner at the port, under the flowing sail which some are setting to the breeze. I, for one, love not the excitement of uncertainty. Let those who do, content themselves with hazarding their own lives, and leave the multitude to float on in the old channels; at least, until they themselves have fully sounded out the new, placed the buoys, and marked the anchoring-places for the more feeble barks which they would have to follow in their wake.

Yet far, very far, be it from me to retard or discourage those who are humbly, honestly, and faithfully seeking to unfold pure truth, and to disentangle it from the interminable thread of error which has been so long interwoven with its texture. Oh, no! I love and honor them for their efforts. I esteem them as benefactors of mankind. I know full well how much more they would consult their own ease and comfort, and present reputation too, by “following smoothly and safely in the wake of popular opinion.” I know, too, that it is the great duty of those who are the professed teachers of reli-

gion "to rise above the opinions of their contemporaries, and to seek for pure truth, and to proclaim it; and, if they seek for reputation, to seek it from God and a future age." But I know that such as these will agree with me, that the best reformati^ons have been, and will be, wrought by reformers who feel the greatest tenderness for all honest error; who love and honor genuine piety, though its flame shines amid heaps of worthless rubbish; who, while they have felt and gratefully acknowledged the wonderful powers of the gift of reason, have also known and acknowledged its fallibility, and its insufficiency as a sole guide to all truth; who, while they have glowed with happiness in exercising the high prerogatives of this spark of divinity within them, have always maintained in their breasts the teachableness of little children, and have felt themselves in need of and willing to receive, with meekness, the revelations which God has vouchsafed to grant to his human family.

I love and honor such as spend their strength and give their lives to enlighten and improve themselves and their race. But I cannot respect or sympathize with those headlong reformers who scorn the less powerful, it may be, but equally honest, labors of those who have gone before, or are striving with them in the same work; who brand as "cowards and charlatans" the less daring, but more modest minds, whose pace, if slower, is surer than their own. I charge them not with lack of honesty; but, in their eagerness, they seem often to be overcome by the infirmities of their nature, and to yield to

vain-glory and arrogance in estimating the importance of their own acquirements and discoveries, and in underrating the judgment of others. As one says, "Counting themselves the subjects of a glorious emancipation, the participators of a great light, they freely use the words of self-gratulation, and very honestly thank God that they are not as other men."

It especially behooves us of the multitude to guard ourselves against a contagion, which, if it slay not those who spread it, will be spiritual destruction to us; which, if it be sport to them, will be death to us. Let us hold fast and sacred the "sure word of prophecy," the sure revelations of God. Let us rejoice that we have heard the voice of God himself, and know that he hath talked with man. Let us not "break through" the bounds which he has set for us, too curiously to gaze, lest we perish!

Notwithstanding the errors and follies and sins of friends and foes, truth has been advancing, is advancing, and will advance. The tide rolls on: though its waves are ever rising and falling, it sets towards the eternal shore. But if those who seek to move on with it be not embarked in a safer vessel than human reason alone can build; if they be not secured by heavier anchors than human arguments, they will assuredly make shipwreck of their own faith, and engulf those whom they profess to pilot to the haven of rest.

LOVE TO GOD.

Public Address before the Society for Mutual Improvement,

Delivered Jan. 8, 1887.

IN accepting your appointment, my friends of this association, to address you on your public anniversary, I am influenced, almost solely, by the wish to show you that time has not weakened my respect and attachment to this institution, or my belief in its fitness as a means of attaining its objects. If any thing could make me willing to perform the duty allotted me, it is the opportunity which it gives me to bear a testimony, deserving of some weight from being the testimony of experience, to the happiness, if not the benefit, which such an association as ours is capable of affording.

An original member of any society, which has numbered the years which ours has done, can scarcely cast a retrospective glance, without finding lessons, full of instruction, scattered thick over the path which he has trodden; and, if his heart be not hard and icy indeed, such a review must melt it to the impress of good emotions. What such a retrospect must be to one whose memory's deepest records have been made in this association, you will not ask me to delineate. Indulge me, however, in expressing my belief, that, if the soul of man is

ever capable of pure, heaven-worthy friendship, with all its train of joy and blessing, then, in such an association as this, in such pursuits as ours, such friendship will be nurtured as it can nowhere else be nurtured beyond the sacred hearthstone and the family altar itself.

In the house of prayer and of religious instruction we meet, it is true, for equally holy purposes; but there, although assembled nominally as Christian brethren, we too often meet and part as strangers. The warm sympathies which are drawn out when mind meets mind, and the living voice of friend with friend is heard, cannot be produced by sitting in contiguous seats, or even by listening to one instructor, however beloved, or however wise and eloquent. We may, doubtless, often learn more, but too often we feel less; and, if the heart be not softened, however beautiful may be the seal of truth, and whatever be the force with which it is applied, it will make but a faint impression.

If, then, this temple, dedicated as it is to improvement in religious knowledge and moral worth, be not desecrated; if our professed objects and pursuits be not merely professed,—improvement must follow; growth in all that is rejoicing, purifying, expanding to the intellect and heart, must be felt and exhibited.

In the essay of this evening, I do not propose to take a topic, such as, according to one part of the plan of our private meetings, will necessarily produce discussion; upon which the writer, after making what research he is able by himself, seeks to obtain the views and information of others; but

rather one of those which, you well know, often employ some of our most delightful evenings, when taking a theme of a purely practical character, we strive to illustrate, and enforce upon each other's minds, matters of duty and of excitement to love and good works. I would attempt something which will give scope to feelings that I ought to delight to cherish in my own mind, and which, in so doing, may possibly strike one chord that will vibrate in your souls.

It is a well-known tradition of the beloved apostle, that, when every exhortation he uttered seemed to be the last which could issue from his lips, his dying words still spoke of love. That spirit which gave him his most enviable title burned within him with unaltered warmth and brightness, while the lamp of life was sinking in its socket. He felt, to the last throb of his heart, that "love is of God," and that every one who knoweth of love knoweth of God; but that he who loveth not, though he have all knowledge else, and all faith, and understand all mysteries, yet knoweth not God; for "God is love." "Love one another," said the expiring saint; for well he knew and taught, that, if a man love not his brother, he cannot love God. But well he knew and taught also, that, if a man do in truth love God, he will love his brother also.

But can man in very deed love God? Can the finite love the infinite? It is the command of that infinite and just One. It can, then, be obeyed. He who made man knows what is in man. He knows that love is an affection of the heart, — an affection

not subject to the will alone. He knows that we cannot obey a command to love, as we can a command to do : therefore it is that with the command come the means of affording obedience. As to a command for the exercise of energies and faculties, other than the affections, is always annexed the promise of sufficient power, so with the command for the exercise of the affections is always presented inducement, motive, attraction.

Thus it was at the original promulgation of this law to the children of Israel. The character of Him who gave it is not presented, as in cases requiring mere physical or ceremonial obedience, simply as the sovereign and rightful Lawgiver, "I am the Lord," but "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,—out of the house of bondage;" "The Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering and abundant in goodness;" "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

It will be denied by none, that to obey a physical or ceremonial law, given by him who has a right to command, is a duty, provided he furnishes the power of performance. So also is it a duty to obey a command to place the affections upon given objects, provided sufficient attractions and inducements to love are presented in those objects. And as, in the former case, we may refuse to exercise the strength or other faculties bestowed, and thus be liable to condemnation as disobedient; so, in the latter case, if we wilfully shut our eyes to the beauties presented for our admiration,—if we refuse

to study the nature of the objects we are told to love,—if we perversely form our tastes for other and debasing objects of love, we are equally guilty and deserving of condemnation. If, on the other hand, we hear the command, with a desire to obey it as the mandate of our rightful Sovereign,—if we resist the importunate claims of lower objects, and give our minds to the investigation of the character of God, and his claims upon our love, we shall be exercising a virtue which will bring its reward by opening our souls to the glories of his perfections, and giving us the joy and peace which they have who love the Lord.

It seems to me, then, that we cannot better employ the time of our first meeting in a new year, both of our society and of our life, than in the consideration of some of the reasons we have for loving God, the means of cherishing this holy affection, and the evidences we shall find in ourselves if we have this love abiding in our hearts.

1. What reasons have we for loving God ?

The first cause which moves the human heart to love is gratitude for benefits voluntarily and kindly bestowed. A sense of necessity causes the infant to turn to its parent ; but, unless the aid sought be kindly bestowed, love will hardly spring up even in the simple heart of infancy. Ask children why they love their parents, and the substance of the answer will be, Because they first loved us, and have been kind and good to us. The first answer which arises to the question, Why should we love God ?

will be the same. It is a reason which will present itself and be acknowledged before any other can obtain influence on the mind. It is a reason which can be brought home to the tender and affectionate mind of the child who just begins to lisp the name of his Father who is in heaven ; it swells the bosom glowing with the full enjoyment of mature life ; it rekindles the eye of decaying age, as it is cast back upon the monuments of a father's love which mark the passage of years gone by.

The claims of the Almighty upon the gratitude of man commence with the mandate which gave him birth. Why was man created ? I cannot assent to a view of the Deity, often presented, but of which my mind can form no conception, as "living alone" in ineffable bliss ; "self-enjoying the contemplation of his own perfections." I rather love to contemplate him as existing, indeed, "before the mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the earth and the world," but as surrounded, even then, by myriads of exalted and happy beings, — uncounted proofs of wisdom, power, and goodness, extending wide through space ; worlds rolling over worlds, whose age, even then, partook more of eternity than we can grasp even in thought. Yet there was room for happiness. Another theatre was opened ; another link was added to the golden chain, fastened to the throne of infinity ; the breathing spirit moved upon our chaos ; God created the earth, and man stood in the image of his Maker, a living soul.

Creation, life, is felt by every rational being to

be a blessing. It shines in the laughing eye of infancy ; it is seen in the joyous bound of childhood, and the elastic step of youth. Before the question can arise in the mind, "How came I thus? how here?" — it is confessed that it is good to be ; and as every step, from infancy to maturity, shows new proofs that He who gave this life is good, that with life he has given what may make it a growing blessing, that soul must be corrupted early indeed which does not once at least know what gratitude is ; and, if this feeling be not smothered almost by violence, it must lead on to love.

If our personal experience of the goodness of God appear to some not to be the purest or highest reason why we should love him, yet it is one which we draw in at every breath, which we feel with every glow of health, which meets the eye on every page of the wide-spread book of nature. Still, there is no room for selfish emotion ; there is no room for that pride which creeps in with any notion of distinction, even in undeserved favor. For we see the same goodness offering the same mercies to a whole race ; we behold the same rich banquet spread for all ; and while we are ready to exclaim, "Lord, why was I a guest?" we must find our gratitude and love illimitably increased by viewing the unnumbered myriads as richly blessed as ourselves.

The sublime idea of the one First Cause, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, would, if alone, fill the finite mind with awe and reverence, perhaps with dread and alarm ; but, while we contemplate

in the hand which made, the same which upholds and blesses its creation; the same wisdom which designed, directing and controlling all for good,—gratitude and love will mix with reverence, and soften the awe which might otherwise overwhelm us. And this we do see, as our knowledge of the divine character increases. We see the same presence which fills immensity, regarding the fall of the sparrow. We behold the same Being whose glory is above the worship of the loftiest intelligence, supporting and comforting the lowest, weakest, humblest, of his creatures. We feel his fulness equally, when our minds are raised to the highest stretch of exalted contemplation, and when, amidst the troubles of life, we ask his sustaining grace. When our thoughts range the numberless worlds of space, he is there; and when, in the narrow, darkened chamber of sickness, we implore his help, surely he is there!

All around us we see inexhaustible provision made for our happiness and the happiness of all. We see that all were made for happiness even here. In seeking the supply of our mere animal wants, we find rich sources of enjoyment; for,

“Not content with every food of life to nourish man,
He makes all nature beauty to his eye, and music to his ear.”

The aliment needed for the body gives not only relief to hunger, but pleasure to the taste; earth not only seems to bring forth food for man and beast, but throws out tireless beauties to the eye; the ear not only hears sounds to warn from danger,

but conveys the thrills of music to the indwelling soul; the air not only brings the life of man, but bears to his delighted sense the fragrance of the summer's morning; the touch not only tells the mind of form and substance, but the grasp of friendship shows that spirit and matter dwell together. The original, undisturbed course of nature is all arranged to produce enjoyment. When suffering is endured, it is because something is deranged,—something is turned differently from its original design. All was planned by infinite benevolence, even were this world to be man's everlasting home.

But man was not made for this world alone. He is not merely a happy and a highly distinguished animal; nor is reason given him to be exercised merely in improving his state in this life. Man is capable of immortality. And for his future existence and future happiness, even more ample provision is made, than is made for the life that now is. His powers are capable of unlimited increase; and no less unlimited are the means of filling his increased capacities. Are the matured powers of the highest human intellect as fully supplied with means of enjoyment, adapted to those powers, as is the puerile mind of infancy with its baubles and toys? So will the resources of infinite wisdom and goodness find "joys unspeakable and full of glory" for the eternally developing desires of immortal creatures.

Can we contemplate such goodness as this, and not feel a holy gratitude leading out our souls in

love to such a Benefactor? Yet this is not all. Upon this rich, unbounded accumulation of blessings, present and in prospect, man, ungrateful, blind, and wilful, has in all ages turned his back, and sought for happiness in the low gratification of mere animal desires, in the abuse of the gifts bestowed upon him. Has an offended Sovereign left him to his folly unchecked? Oh, not so! for he is indeed "long-suffering, merciful, and gracious; abundant in goodness and truth, showing mercy to thousands," even of those who love him not, and keep not his commandments. Even to such has he lengthened out the day of probation; and again and again has the voice of his love been heard, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" And when that voice, uttered at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers of old, had been unheeded, and man had sunk low in debasement, guilt, and misery, he had yet in reserve a new effort of unwearied love: he hath, in these latter days, sent his own Son into the world to preach repentance, to suffer, and to die, that man might yet be saved. When we, each for himself, examine our own ways, and find how often and how long we have turned away our eyes, and shut our ears, and closed our hearts, to all these calls upon our gratitude and love; and then consider the wonders of redeeming mercy, still urging us to accept the salvation which we have so often rejected, almost with scorn, can we again ask, Why should we love God?

It is not, however, in the calls of gratitude alone that we find reasons for loving God. If the moral

perceptions be not wholly eradicated; if any sensibility remains to what is sublime, harmonious, beautiful; to whatever is pure and good, — the character of God, contemplated though it be with an eye which shrinks abashed from its beams, must appear venerable and lovely. When we think of the characters of the worthies of ancient times or of foreign lands, of men who never have done and never can do us personal benefit, do we not love them? Who has studied the character of Fenelon, or his modern equal, Cheverus, or the devoted Oberlin or Henry Martyn, and has not loved them? Who has read of Howard, and has not longed to embrace him? And these sentiments would be the same, had not these lights of the world effected the good they have. Had they failed in all their efforts (could we then have known their characters as well), should we not still love them? It is their characters, their attributes, we love, more than their works. So, if it be possible for us to separate the character of God from our obligations to him, — if we can for a moment consider his character in the abstract, — we must have our affections drawn towards him. True, it is the attribute of goodness which is the pole of attraction to our hearts. When we meditate upon infinite wisdom, infinite power, we feel no love. We wonder, admire, and reverence; and even the idea of infinite holiness makes us rather shrink back with an almost appalling sense of our own unworthiness. But when we contemplate wisdom, power, and holiness, clasped together by the eternal zone of infinite goodness, then surely must

our hearts go out in love towards such a display of moral perfections.

Another cause for love to God consists in the power he hath given us to love him. We can love only those attributes of which we can form distinct conceptions, and we can have such conceptions of those attributes only of which we have the germ implanted in our souls ; and this germ has been implanted by God himself for our happiness ; for thus what we can love we can imitate. If, then, we truly love God, can we at the same time love what is opposite to all his attributes ? Can we love holiness and sin, purity and pollution ? We believe that the perfections of God constitute his happiness. If we love these perfections, we shall imitate them ; and in imitating them, we secure our own happiness.

2. If it be our duty and happiness to love God, it is surely a question worthy of all solicitude, How shall we cherish this holy affection in our hearts ?

The first means of doing this is frequent, habitual meditation like that in which we have now been engaged, and the diligent study of his character and will, as displayed in the wide-spread leaves of the books of nature, of providence, and of scripture, and especially in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, who was the express portraiture of his character. If the love of God cannot be produced and fixed in the heart by an effort of the will, neither can it be by occasionally sending forth the mind or the imagination to dwell upon the glories of his works or the wonders of his love. A transient glow

of grateful emotion, when just blessed with some new display of his beneficence, is not that love which is the fulfilment of the first and great commandment. To love God, we must study to know him, and to fix in our hearts such a firm conviction of his supreme goodness, wisdom, and power, as will incline us and enable us to trust him and submit unrepiningly to him at times when his ways are veiled in darkness, as well as when the effulgence of his countenance beams full upon us. Finite as we are at best, and blinded by our sins and follies, what can we know of the ways of the Almighty? Yet, while so much of mercy and beneficence is visible even to our eyes, shall we not have faith that what we see not yet is equally good, kind, and merciful?

It is only by marking his hand in the daily events of life,—by referring all to him,—by connecting our plans, our hopes, our desires, with him,—in short, by “setting the Lord always before our face,” that we can form within our souls that filial love for him, which, like the affection of a child for a wise yet indulgent human parent, will be as a household charm, soothing, supporting, defending, and elevating us above corroding care and discontent.

How common is the error, that God is to be thought of only in the church or the closet; only when the stole of sanctity is put on, and the countenance composed to solemnity! I would have the bright eye of youthful joy glisten brighter, as the thought of God comes over the mind. I would have it believed that he loves to behold the gaiety of heart which a right use of his gifts creates, and

that he is pleased to have his children "come before him with gladness." I would have the voice of joy go up from the tabernacles of the righteous. Does the indulgent parent wish his children to wait for his absence to show their pleasure at the gifts which he has bestowed? Does he not rather anticipate the sight of their pleasure as their best offering of thanks? There is no enjoyment which God has bestowed which may not be indulged in before him. The pleasures of sin must shrink from his eye; but his gifts have their richest zest when associated with a sense of his presence. This lifts us and our joys up to him. It cannot bring him down, or degrade him in our thoughts.

But it is not in scenes of joy alone that human life consists. Is it more difficult to cherish the love of God amidst the clouds of sorrow which so often overshadow our path? He who has long observed the human character will tell us, that the purest instances of this love—of filial, child-like love to God—are to be found in the narrowest chambers of affliction, poverty, sickness, and death itself. How is this? How has that oppressed spirit learned to love a Being whose gifts are so scanty, —whose hand seems lifted but to scatter sorrows in his path,—whose ear seems deaf to supplication, and whose eye seems averted from the misery he permits? But does that oppressed spirit thus view the power that guides all events? No. When the storm first arose, and the winds beat upon his dwelling, his heart trembled, and his faith was shaken to the foundation indeed; but that

foundation was a rock. He has meditated upon the character of God, and he knows that He can take no pleasure in the sorrows of his children. He sees no ground in all his works for believing that He formed any thing for suffering. He has found that, even with his present narrow vision, he can catch glimpses of the purposes of God in his dealings with him. He can see how afflictions have already been good for him. He has tasted a peace, even in the watching hours of sickness, which was unknown to him when health and strength permitted him to be involved in the active bustle of business. He has followed, by light from the gospel of Jesus Christ, the friends whom he has lost through the darkness of the grave, to a glorious resurrection and to life eternal. He has been taught, by the loss of earthly wealth, to look for better riches in the soul, and to lay up treasures in heaven. He has felt himself "cast down, but not destroyed; troubled on every side, but not forsaken; perplexed, but not in despair." He has not found the ear of his heavenly Parent deaf to his supplications, or felt that his eye was averted from him for a moment. He has ever found his grace sufficient for him; he trusts that he will yet bring him out of the furnace of affliction as gold purified in the fire; and he loves God as fervently as when he was surrounded by every joy which the human heart can desire.

If the love of God is to be produced and cherished in the heart by the study of his character, and by constantly associating his presence with all our

concerns, these contemplations and associations can be sustained only by intercourse with him in prayer. We may love a character, the possessor of which we have never seen, whose voice we have never heard, with whom we have never taken sweet counsel. But could we meet with him, and hold intimate communion with him, — could we know even that his thoughts and ours were dwelling upon each other, and that we were to each other objects of mutual regard, — would not the bond which draws our affections to him be greatly strengthened? This communion, this intercourse, we may hold with God. He has graciously established the channel of such communication, and it is by prayer. As in this sacred exercise we pour out our souls before him, though we hear not the audible answer, we shall feel indeed that “we are not alone, for our Father is with us.”

The privilege of prayer is but partially apprehended by him who knows it only in the stated service of the consecrated altar. We may worship God, and worship him in spirit and in truth, too, in all the places “where prayer is wont to be made;” we may bow before him in public; we may unite with the loved family circle at the domestic altar; we may, too, bend the knee often and devoutly in the holy solitude of the closet; and still not fully know the blessing of

“The power that he hath given us
To pour our souls in prayer.”

There is yet a secret communion, such as we

feel in the presence of one whom we love and reverence, though no voice is uttered, no words are formed. It is the "praying always with all prayer;" it is the ascending of the soul,—a constant going-out of the affections, "which none but he who feels it knows."

"So high a measure of spiritual attainment as this, however," as one most truly observes, "is at best but an infrequent case; at any rate, it never can be ours, except we use the requisite means of arriving at it." And surely, among the best means is the custom of setting apart stated seasons for devotion. We must feed the soul as we do the body, furnishing it with suitable nourishment at suitable intervals. The wisdom and experience of all the religious world insist on this; and there is much necessity to state it urgently; for there seems to be a notion growing into favor with some, that as the spirit, and not the form, is the essential thing, it is better not to be burthened with methods and rules, but simply to pray always; which, there is reason to fear, would in practice be found a precept to pray never.

3. We have but little time left to inquire what evidence we shall exhibit in our lives, if we have the love of God abiding in us. Brief as it is needful for us to be, we may find an all-comprehensive answer in the words of the Son of God, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And we shall not fail to remember especially that command, which ever

stands upon the sacred tables, both of the law of Moses and of Christ, linked with the first and great command: "This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

But how shall he love him? — as the mere inhabitant of earth? — as the poor animal who requires to be fed and sheltered for a few days or years, and then to fall forgotten into his native dust? No: he who loves God will love his brother as the creature of God. He will honor the image of God in man; and where he sees that image scathed, blotted, defiled, he will strive to restore or re-enstamp it. He will both say and do what is needful that his brother be clothed, fed, and warmed; but not this alone. If we love an earthly friend even, do we not desire that others — that all should love him? Much more, if we do indeed love our heavenly Father, shall we desire that all his children should know and love him too.

While, then, the love of God will make us love our brother also, both these loves will unite to make us anxious and zealous for the honor of that blessed religion which he has sent by his beloved Son, to bring back his sinful children on earth to light and life and happiness eternal. In our own lives will be seen the beauty of that "glad faith" and "lofty trust" which religion brings. To him

"From whom is all that soothes the life of man;
His high endeavor and his glad success;
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve," —

to him will our strength, our faculties, our possessions, be willingly devoted. The fruit of our love will be obedience. We shall never hesitate to labor and spend, as well as pray, that his kingdom may come. We shall not only see to it that the fire goes not out, and the incense is not lacking, upon our own altars. We shall not feel, or seek to feel, that we have "done our part," even if we have willingly supplied our own priest with the ephod and the censer; nor if we have given the God-speed to him who solicits our aid for others who are famishing for the bread of life. We shall ask and seek, Who will show us any good to do? Our voluntary offerings, according as the Lord hath prospered us, not according to what will save our reputation in the eyes of men, will be laid at the door of the sanctuary; and we shall, after all, say, as did the servant of God of old, "Who am I that I should be able to offer willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have I given unto thee."

If it be true that what we love we strive to imitate, and whom we love we delight to honor and to please; then, if we indeed love God, and know his perfections, we shall ever be striving to become pure as he is pure,—holy as he is holy. Then shall we find it a delight to do good to his children, and to spend and be spent in his service. Here is no room for the imagination to deceive us. We may work ourselves up into fervor; we may think that we enjoy communion with God in prayer; we may think that we delight to dwell

upon the wonders of his wisdom, power, and goodness; and yet all this may be but the workings of excited feeling, worthless as "the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal." But if we find ourselves earnestly engaged in doing his will; if we feel it to be our honor and our happiness to be co-workers with Jesus Christ, in advancing his purposes of benevolence, — then indeed, but not till then, may we trust that we have the love of God abiding in us. Then may we hope to find admission to his presence at last, and to hear from the lips of his vicegerent the acknowledgment, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

IS IT THE DUTY AND BEST POLICY OF THE CHRISTIAN
POWERS OF EUROPE AND OF THE UNITED STATES TO
ASSIST THE GREEKS IN THEIR ENDEAVORS TO OBTAIN
CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS EMANCIPATION ? *

W. G. Quensie
Read before the Portsmouth Foreign Society,
March, 1838.

IN discussing this question, I could have wished to appear on that side where the feelings of the society might be most easily engaged to support me; where little argument would be necessary, and more ardor might be felt; and where I might have indulged, with advantage, my own unexamined impressions and crude notions in favor of the Greeks. It is always pleasanter to think well than ill of a people, as of an individual; and I have been sorry to be obliged to correct my own errors with respect to the character of that nation, or to attempt to destroy in others the same delusive feelings in their favor,—feelings which, being fortunately compelled to expend themselves in vain wishes and flourishes of eloquence, can do no harm in the world, and rather favor a benevolent state of

* We have been induced to publish this discussion of an almost forgotten question, from the similarity of the issues which it involved to those which have been raised by the movements and public addresses of the eloquent Hungarian, who has lately been the nation's guest.

mind. Who does not abhor the task of raking among the ashes of the dead, especially when they have become sacred, if for nothing else, by being enshrined in a Grecian sarcophagus, or buried among Grecian ruins?

It would not be difficult to prove, however, that much error exists in the popular notions with regard even to the character of ancient Greece. Still it is easier and pleasanter to talk of her former glory; her renown in the arts of peace and of war; the magnificence of her monuments, beautiful even in ruins; of the devoted patriotism of her sons, the exalted virtue of her daughters, the splendor of her literature, and the wisdom of her sages.

But, like most things which are great, the character of the ancient Greeks looks best in the distance. The mists of antiquity are favorable to the concealment of minute defects; which, by their number, even if none of a glaring nature could be found, would go far to overshadow the brilliant features of beauty which are now held up to us.

To those who are familiar with Grecian history, I need not speak of the fickleness, the base ingratitude to some of their greatest national benefactors, the turbulence under good government, and the abject submission when under the influence of fear and tyranny, which mark every stage of their national existence. That excessive vanity, cunning, and deceit formed prominent traits in their character, is easy to be shown.

The truest of all books, alluding to an important portion of their territory, says: "One of their

own prophets has said, The Cretans are always liars; and this witness is true." And it is a singular sort of praise which is bestowed by one of their flatterers, that "they cannot tell the same story twice, without varying the embellishments of circumstance and diction."

But it is with the modern Greeks that we are at present concerned. And I have not yet obtained any proof that this people inherit any thing but the name and vices of their boasted progenitors. Even now, did I believe that a Greek of the present day bears a trace of the Greek of the days of Leonidas or of Pericles, I would go far to behold a man who was born in Sparta or in Athens. I have looked with eagerness upon a miserable trafficker from the isles of the Archipelago, and should rejoice that there existed even such a memento that Greece was, did not his debased and wretched character make me rather wish to take from him the name of a nation I am so much disposed to respect and love.

Recent travellers agree in representing the modern Greeks as debased, ignorant, deceitful, cunning, and abject. Some writers assert, that they are far below their tyrants, the Turks, in morals, in religion, and the arts of civilized life. Although bearing the name of Christians, they are unacquainted with the virtues and the doctrines of Christianity. Their priesthood, sunk in ignorance and superstition, disgrace their sacred office. Fatalism is received in its greatest extent, and pervades every motive of action. Their acts of bravery are acts

of desperation, — their self-devotion, the working of despair; for, when not impelled by this, they are cowardly in the extreme. They are treacherous and false even towards each other; ready to betray or murder even their own companions for the merest trifle. Chiefs who have fought side by side against the common enemy will lie in wait to plunder one ^{another} of their common spoils. In short, to use the language of an officer who has long served in their armies, “they are the vilest miscreants upon the face of the earth.”

Permit me to give you one extract from a writer who cannot be accused of wishing to lower their character, whatever may be his credit in other respects: —

“The Greeks have in many instances shown a desperate frenzy in distress, and a sanguinary ferocity in prosperity, but are certainly not at all notorious for that cool, determined courage which is necessary for the accomplishment of any great action. They are light, inconstant, and treacherous; exceedingly subtle in all their dealings, and quite remarkable for a total ignorance of the propriety of adhering to truth.”

To go no further, — if the half of what is told us be true, and if we then make allowance for those honorable exceptions which even the most savage nations always afford, I appeal to the good sense of every man, if for such a people as this, the nations of Europe, and our own, should be called upon to involve themselves in difficulties and wars.

We have had an elaborate display of the rise,

progress, and decay of nations. It has been shown us from history, that nations, like individuals, have their youth, manhood, old age, and death. But my own recollection does not furnish me, nor have I heard, any facts to show that a nation ever has, for a considerable length of time, renewed its youth, and, after suffering the effects of natural decay, arisen from the palsied tremblings of age to the vigor and activity of better days. I think that I am safe in saying that such an instance cannot be produced. "Nations, like beauty, know no second spring." A momentary struggle may recall the remembrance of youthful strength; but it is only the expiring gasp, and is followed by annihilation. Such — must we not believe? — is the present struggle of the Greeks.

This people arose by slow degrees to fill a large and prominent place among the nations of the earth. More distinguished by their refinement, amidst surrounding barbarism, than by their mere superiority in military prowess, — by the power of knowledge than that of brute force, — they shone out at length with a glory more refulgent, and far more intrinsic, than that of other nations, which, in a shorter space of time, distended their own meagre dimensions by absorbing their weaker neighbors. Thus constituted, their national existence was longer in passing through its various stages than was that of other nations; and the "last scene of all," which we behold, lingers, like the rest; but, with lengthening shadows and some brilliant flickerings, approaches its certain termination.

My first argument, then, against the proposal to assist the Greeks is, that they are unworthy of our support. I have not detained the society to hear long quotations from authorities which would sustain my opinion. The subject has been long before the public, and has excited a strong interest on both sides. Few, therefore, can have omitted to form some opinion of its merits; and all, I think, who have impartially examined it, will allow the correctness of my assertions.

The very little which has been said by their friends respecting the national character of the Modern Greeks shows that it is thought best to rest their reputation — as many a rotten reputation has before been rested — upon the fame of their fathers. But if any one is disposed to undertake a crusade in their behalf, far be it from me to repress his generous ardor. I will myself assist to crown him with Mambrino's helmet, and give him the war-cry of his worthy predecessor, who has been alluded to this evening, — "Enchantments, avaunt! and Heaven prosper truth, justice, and noble chivalry."

But I would, in the second place, take the liberty to ask the advocates of foreign interference in the affairs of Greece, on what principles of national justice they found their right to intermeddle with the concerns of the Turkish Government. Do they pretend that the Turks are usurpers, and have no right to demand submission from the Greeks? The sacking of Constantinople and the final overthrow of the Eastern empire by Mahomet II. took place in the year 1453 of the Christian era. For

three hundred and seventy years, therefore, have the present government had uninterrupted possession of the country, and exercised unquestioned authority over the people. To use the words of another, "If the Grand Signor cannot establish a claim to the throne of Constantinople, I know not of any sovereign in Europe whose title will bear examination. The singularity of two nations living on the same spot, and of the conquered having been kept so entirely distinct from the conquerors, preserves the original injustice of the subjection fresh before our eyes. Were it not for this circumstance, neither the importance nor the character of the Greeks is such as to awaken the political or the moral sympathies of the nations of Christendom." "The Greeks, taken collectively, cannot in fact be so properly called an individual people, as a religious sect dissenting from the established church of the Ottoman empire."

Must we not consider the Turks as having, at least, as good a right to the obedience of the Greeks as the English have to that of the Irish? Why do we not hear of any proposal for the deliverance of the latter much-oppressed people? Is it because their oppressors are too powerful? Does the size of the giant, or his iron mace, alarm the valorous knight?

But we are told that the cruelties of the Turks towards the Greeks during their present insurrection (the gentleman opposite will pardon the term) have placed them "without the pale both of humanity, and of those rules which govern the intercourse

of nations." But those who make this assertion should look closer into the circumstances of the case. This is a struggle of barbarian with barbarian. There is not room for choice between them. If, "when Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war;" when Greek meets Turk, then comes, not the contest of honorable warfare, but the rencounter of every hellish passion. Are the Turks perfidious and cruel? so are the Greeks when they have power in their hands. Do the Turks butcher their prisoners in cold blood? so have the Greeks. Do the Turks violate the most solemn treaties? so have the Greeks. Neither nation should be judged by the rules which apply to civilized humanity. Deeds upon which we look with utter abhorrence as infamous and degrading, they consider as mere matters of course, connected with the fortunes of war.

We hear much of the high obligations under which all civilized nations lie to the Greeks. "The bondage of the Modern Greeks," it has been said, "is a disgrace to the nations of civilized Europe. The children of those who were our preceptors in art and in science, and who have exalted human nature by the splendor of their virtues, we are suffering to be annihilated by a desolating tyranny, from which a slight effort would deliver them." All this sounds very fine; but it does not convince me that the nations of civilized Europe are bound to break down all the landmarks of international law; invade the rights of a government with which they have no quarrel; not only involve themselves

in war with the Turks, but sow the seeds of discord among themselves, to snatch the degenerate descendants of a once illustrious nation from a government which we choose to pronounce tyrannical.

That any interference on the part of the powers of Europe would be beneficial to the Greeks, is very problematical. Should they succeed in driving off the Turks, they might snatch the victim from the fangs of the tiger; but would it not be to throw it to a herd of wolves, to be dismembered and destroyed piecemeal?

Almost have these powers fallen to tearing each other upon the mere suspicion that some of their number projected aid to the Greeks. Hear, too, the chivalrous language of England, who asserts that she is "the power most able to afford them protection, and has the fewest motives to take unfair advantage of their weakness." She has, as we are assured in one of her half-official papers, not only conceived, but for some time acted upon, "a plan to reconcile humanity to the Greeks with the interests of England." This plan, which her secret agents have for some time been attempting to effect, is in fact to prevail upon the Greeks to place several districts of their country under the protection of England. Blessed deliverance! Let Ireland and India attest to its immense advantages! But this extraordinary effort of kindness must receive some compensation. What, then, will be the advantages to England, for which she is willing to take several Greek districts under her

protection ? These are her own calculations : " A desirable barrier will be opposed to Russia, by the possession of important positions. A predominant influence will be secured in the East. By an union with the only maritime power in the East, she will have a possible enemy off her hands ; and, in case of future hostilities with the United States, will be able to add immensely to her disposable force in those quarters where it would be most needed." Vastly disinterested and magnanimous, most assuredly ! And this worthy example, doubtless, would be followed. Russia, perhaps, would be equally benevolent ; and would not only be willing to take several Greek districts under her protection, but the whole Turkish empire, Archipelago and all !

To inquire if it be the duty of the powers of Europe to assist the Greeks, seems to be ridiculous. With the views and intentions with which they would undertake it, it certainly would not be their " duty," however they may think it their " best policy."

With regard to our own country, the arguments which I have used apply with their full force ; and there are others which are more peculiarly applicable to us.

Situated at a safe distance, we have made it our rule of policy to keep aloof from the wranglings of the crazy potentates of the other Continent. We boast much of our sacred regard to the laws of nations, — of our rigid neutrality ; and our happiness and national prosperity have been promoted by this course. Shall we now

hazard all upon a Quixotic scheme to deliver a people of whom we know but little, and nothing favorable but that they bear the same name with a nation honored and admired when viewed from our seats of learning, or contemplated in books? What madness, what folly, would it be to risk the peace of our own country, to give every nation of Europe a pretence to quarrel with us, and open our doors to the hounds of war, because we are so tenderly alive to the miseries of classic Greece? Let us leave these idle fancies to the poets and orators. It is to them a theme most valuable; and almost would it be a subject of regret, were it taken from them by the emancipation, as it is called, of their favorite people. For, let Greece be freed,—let her society be thrown open to the inspection of the world,—and, although her sky and her fields and her rocks might still supply the poet's pen, we should hear no more of the virtues and glories of her children.

It is urged that we need not infringe the laws of neutrality; that we may take only private measures to advance our object. Let there be no obstacles thrown by our government in the way of personal enlistments, or shipments of arms to the Greeks; let citizens, and the officers of the army and navy, be free to engage in the cause,—that is, let our rulers wink at all breaches of our laws, provided they are favorable to the Greek cause; and there will be no want of means for the accomplishment of our wishes.

Is this doctrine consistent with good morals? Is

it worthy of a cause which claims the highest virtue for its foundation? Away with such skulking philanthropy! Whatever is done, let it be done openly, and in the face of day. Leave it to pirates and buccaneers to manœuvre in the dark; and let all who bear the American name fight under their own stripes and stars, or fight not at all.

It is said, too, that we run no risk by interfering with the Ottoman government: they can do us no harm. Admit that we have nothing to fear from the Turks themselves. Can it be believed that the jealousy which has kept Russia in check will slumber as to us? Will England calmly see us gaining an influence in the Mediterranean, and assuming the very place she is plotting to obtain, with a view to future hostilities with this very nation?

But I am unequal to pursue any train of political speculation. I trust that enough has been said by me to serve, at least, as an apology for the side of the question which I have undertaken to defend. I have endeavored to show, —

1. That the Greeks, as a people, are unworthy of the sympathy we have felt for them.

2. That any interference with their concerns would be an unjustifiable breach of the law of nations.

3. That the nations of Europe are far too much engrossed by their own selfish views and ambitious projects, to engage, with good faith, in any plan for the benefit of Greece.

4. That for the United States to attempt any

thing by themselves would be madly to risk their own peace, happiness, and prosperity upon a fallacious project, which is unworthy of the attempt.

5. That the character of the Greeks, and their relative situation with respect to the European powers, is such that, if emancipated from the Turks, they would only fall a prey to other tyrants, who would soon cause their very name to be forgotten, by dividing them, like Poland, as common spoil, and incorporating them among their own dominions.

I will only beg you, once more, not to suffer your feelings to carry you aside from your sober judgment, in voting upon this question. Heed not the effect of mere declamation. Appeals to the feelings are very different from reasons and proofs. Our compassion, our love of liberty, our hatred of oppression, may be aroused, yet our judgment not convinced. We are often led by excitement, thus produced, to engage in an unworthy cause, or to commit actions which, upon cool reflection, we discover rather to have injured than aided the cause in which we have engaged. We admire, but we must condemn, the benevolent infatuation which impels its victim to plunge into certain destruction himself, because he sees a fellow-being perishing before his eyes; and we can hardly forgive the mistaken philanthropist, who, by restraining for a moment the lash of the taskmaster, does but draw down heavier blows upon the miserable object of his rage.

TERMS OF CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

Read at a Church Meeting, July 8, 1823.

It is impossible for those who feel a deep interest in religion to witness the neglect of its most solemn ordinances, without deeply painful reflections. — The ceremonies of Christianity are so few and so simple; they are so evidently useful, and indeed necessary, to cherish devotional feeling, that the neglect of them seems incompatible with any very settled religious principles.

We see our places of worship filled, on the Christian sabbath, with people, who, when one of the only two ordinances of our religion is to be celebrated, retire, as if they had no part or interest therein. It is not, it cannot be, that all these disavow any connection with the Christian church, or view themselves only as hearers and spectators. It is not that they are unwilling, in general, to be regarded as belonging to that church in some sense; but they refuse, for various reasons, to take any steps to distinguish themselves from the mass, who bear the Christian name merely because they were born and educated in a Christian country.

In every place there are undoubtedly many who have never put to themselves the question whether they believe even in the existence of a God, and

who much less have ever examined the proofs of the Christian revelation. There are many more, who, possessing a vague kind of respect for religion, conceive themselves to be believers, and hope to receive, they know not what, of the benefits of religion. But there is also a large class, the members of which are most interesting to the friends of Christianity, because on them principally are to be placed the hopes of the church. From them must her ranks be filled. On them it is to be expected that the influence of her institutions will produce their effect, and from them the cause itself receive support. This class consists of those who seem highly to value the privileges which they do enjoy, and who give evidence in their lives of the advantages they derive from them; but who, nevertheless, keep themselves, as it were, in the outer courts of the temple, deprive themselves of the comforts and benefits of a more intimate participation in religious privileges, and withhold from others the influence of their example in some of the important duties of Christianity; who, living in the world in other respects according to the dictates of religion, yet, by refusing to conform to the rites of Christianity, confirm, in the minds of others, the erroneous opinion that these rites are of little worth, and may be innocently neglected.

Why is it that such persons thus keep back? What prevents them from obeying all the commands of him whom they are willing to call their Master, and from seeking the enjoyment of all the privileges he offers them?

This is an inquiry deeply interesting to the friends of the church; and it behooves them to see that no part of the cause lies with them; that no unnecessary difficulties are raised by unauthorized requirements from those who would approach the ordinances; but that, on the contrary, they be as freely invited, and their way kept as free and as open, as it was left by the great Head of the church.

It is, I conceive, with a view to such an examination that we have selected the present question for discussion, that we may see if the terms of admission which are required by this church are such only as the commands of Christ authorize; at the same time that all is done which he requires to guard the purity of the church.

The question is thus stated: "What qualifications should a church require in candidates for admission to its fellowship?"

It is not necessary to mention here all the different significations of the word *church*. Whether we understand it, in this case, as denoting either the visible church at large, or one of those distinct Christian societies associated for the more convenient performance of worship and discipline, the question will remain the same. These distinct societies were early formed, for obvious reasons. The first church which appears to have regularly assembled for social worship was that at Jerusalem, before the descent of the Holy Spirit: "The number of the names together was about one hundred and twenty." To these were soon added such multi-

tudes as could not possibly assemble in one place. As the gospel was diffused in distant cities and countries also, societies of Christians were formed, each of which was called a church. But all these received the same gospel and the same form of worship, and did therefore in fact together form the visible church in its more extensive sense. The rules of admission, of course, were the same everywhere.

There appears to me but little reason to doubt, that, in the days of the apostles, all who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus were immediately admitted to the participation of the Lord's Supper. There is nothing to be found which indicates any distinction between those who had received baptism, and those who were admitted to all other Christian privileges. In the accounts we have of the additions to the church, the two ordinances are frequently mentioned together; as on the day of Pentecost: "They who gladly received the word spoken by Peter were baptized; and they continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer." It does not appear that it was until the second century that the division was made into two orders of "Believers" and "Catechumens," the former of whom had received baptism, and were in the enjoyment of all the privileges of the church; while the latter were under a course of instruction, previously to being admitted to baptism. The only alteration seems to have been, that a longer course of instruction was required before admission to the

rite of baptism, which still remained the only seal of admission to the church.

These observations are made to show, that, as in the early practice of the church, baptism was the seal of admission to all the privileges of membership, therefore, in inquiring what was the practice of the apostles in the case under consideration, we have only to ascertain what they required previously to administering the rite of baptism, in order to know what they required of candidates for admission to the church. When the address of the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, caused many to be "pricked in their hearts," and they demanded "what they should do," the reply was, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."

When Philip had instructed the Ethiopian eunuch, "preaching unto him Jesus," he administered to him the rite of baptism, only requiring of him that he should "believe with all his heart" that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

The jailer, demanding of Paul and Silas "what he must do to be saved," was directed to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" and, having received instruction in the word of the Lord, was baptized, "he and all his, straightway."

From these and similar passages, occurring continually in the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that all which the apostles required previously to admitting persons to the church was a profession of belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Before making this profession, they evidently must have had some knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ,—the purposes of his coming into the world,—the essential doctrines which he taught, and the duties which he required of all who became his disciples. This instruction we find always to have been given previously to the administration of baptism; though how imperfect an understanding might have been acquired, may be inferred from its being derived frequently from a single address of an apostle, and from the fact that many who were baptized soon manifested their ignorance and their deficiency in the spirit of the gospel which they had professed to believe. Of this, Simon of Samaria, and the Jews who believed, but were “zealous of the law,” are remarkable instances. But there seems, in all the records of the proceedings of the early churches, to have been much less attention to the qualifications of those who were admitted to the church than to their conduct afterwards. As to the first point, we find what would, I apprehend, be called, in our day, great looseness of discipline; but, as to the latter, a bold, decided conduct,—a fixed determination to put away from among them all who, by their manner of life, falsified their profession and disgraced the church. We need only refer to the instances of Simon the sorcerer, and of Ananias and Sapphira.

The children of believing parents, it appears, were also dedicated in baptism; and I can find nothing to prove that they were not also admitted to the Lord's Supper. As they were included in the en-

gements which their parents made with the church, at an age when their parents must have had authority so to engage for them, they were considered as, of course, members of the church, subject to its control, and entitled to its privileges. There can be no just objection to this proceeding, any more than for a parent to take an oath of allegiance to a temporal government, in behalf of himself and his children.

From this imperfect review, we may conclude that the simple rule of the apostles was to require of those who offered themselves for baptism,—or, what was the same thing, for admission into the church,—an open profession of belief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God ; not indeed mere belief as of an historical fact, for the whole scope of their preaching shows that they intended much more than this. They called upon men to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. When, therefore, convinced by their preaching, persons applied for admission to the church, the profession required of them, and their being baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, plainly implied repentance for sin,—a dependence upon the mercy of God as declared, and on the conditions offered in the mediation of Christ for the pardon of sin, and a subjection to the authority of Christ as the great Head of the church.

Here, then, the answer to the question may be rested ; for will any say that the church has a right now to require more than was required by the inspired apostles of our Lord ?

But it may be said, that the church at the present day has not the means of judging of the sincerity of the professions that are made, which the inspired apostles possessed. Other tests, therefore, must be applied to enable us to judge of their sincerity, and also of the correctness of the opinions entertained by candidates for admission to the church, that its purity may be guarded against the intrusion of hypocritical and hollow-hearted professors.

I can find nothing to prove that the apostles ever pretended, though divinely inspired, to any certain knowledge of the state of those whom they admitted; or that they ever exercised, if they ever possessed, a power to reject any who offered themselves, on a mere suspicion of insincerity. As was observed before, the conduct of those who joined their company was carefully attended to after they came under the cognizance of the church; and by their conduct were they judged. And the church, by faithfully performing its own engagements,—by fervent exhortation, admonition, and reproof,—endeavored to reclaim offenders, and guide the wandering; and, in the case of the incorrigible, expelled from their society such as refused to walk in the order of the gospel.

The act of joining the church seemed to imply a desire and willingness to learn, rather than an expression of ready-formed opinions. The candidate offered himself as a disciple of Christ. Convinced that he had hitherto been wrong, and that Jesus Christ alone had the words of eternal life,

he came to him as to his guide and instructor. Such a one was readily admitted into the school of Christ, and received the seal of such admission. He was allowed to sit at the table of his Master, and to enjoy the means of instruction, and all the aids and encouragements which the institutions of the church afforded, that he might thereby be nourished up, and grow in knowledge and in grace.

It would be an interesting inquiry to trace the course by which the ordinances of Christianity became gradually corrupted by the devices of men, until the simple "breaking of bread" among the first disciples grew into the splendid superstition of the Mass of the Roman Catholics; and also to follow the slow but certain steps by which the church has been, since the Reformation, and still is, returning to the original simplicity of her institutions. In the painful dread which many good minds, even at this day, entertain of approaching the table of the Lord; and also in the sad indifference which many others discover to that affecting ordinance, as to a thing in which they have no concern, — in both these errors we may trace the lingering effects of that craft and superstition which supported the gross absurdity of transubstantiation, and withheld the cup from the laity; and the more modern, but scarcely less dangerous error, which makes an assurance of Christian perfection a necessary requisite to a right commemoration of the dying love of the Redeemer.

But there are one or two other considerations which demand our attention at present. The long-

established practice of the congregational churches has been to require of candidates for admission to their fellowship their assent to a written form of covenant, containing a more or less extended statement of the doctrines of Christianity, and a solemn engagement to conform to the obligations of the Christian life. In some of these churches, too, where this form of covenant may have contained in itself little that was objectionable, other requirements have been made; such as an account of "religious experiences," as they are termed, and a decided profession of belief in certain doctrines which have always been matters of "doubtful disputation" in the church. And all who could not give satisfaction on these points have either been refused admittance, or terrified into a delay, which has too often proved fatal to those beginnings of religious desire that need all the kindly influences of the means of grace to nurture and cherish them.

Whatever may be said in defence of private associations, designed to promote a greater degree of piety, or a greater correctness of religious opinions, among individuals connected with them, nothing can justify the demand of any other qualifications or compliances, in admitting to the fellowship of the church, than were demanded by our Lord and his immediate and inspired followers. The church is no private association. Particular churches are but parts of one great whole. One set of laws binds all equally, and there is but one set of laws.

However expedient it may be to have, for convenience, a written form of covenant, such a form, even though framed in Scripture phraseology, much less when composed in mere terms of human invention, should not, I think, be made an indispensable term of admission. The shortest and simplest profession which a candidate, being sufficiently instructed, and possessing competent intelligence, may conscientiously prefer, should be allowed, when offered in credible sincerity.

I have observed that the children of Christian parents, having been baptized in infancy, are to all intents members of the church, and should be subject to its watch and discipline. This appears as evident to my mind as that children are members of the family in which they are born, or subject to, and entitled to the protection of, the government to which their parents have acknowledged their allegiance. It is true, that, in the one case as in the other, there are some duties which they cannot perform, and some privileges which they cannot enjoy, until they arrive at mature age, and have personally entered into certain engagements; such, for instance, as voting in matters relating to government, or filling some office in government. In the first age of the church, when to be a Christian was to be exposed to shame and suffering, it would seem, that for the baptized children of believers to continue to associate with the church must have been a sufficient avowal of their steadfastness in the faith of their parents. But, in the progress of the church, when the mighty of the earth began to give

it their countenance, and in these latter and happier days, when it is fashionable to be in a certain degree religious, it is more likely that those should be willing to wear the badge of Christianity, who are in fact indifferent to divine truth, and who would shrink from the responsibility of an explicit avowal of it. Custom too, and long neglect of what was originally a practice and a duty, have rendered it now almost impossible to extend the discipline of the church to such as have only been offered in baptism by their parents, but have made no open personal profession.

For these, and perhaps other reasons, the practice of requiring from baptized persons, as well as others, an open and explicit avowal of their faith, previously to their admission to full communion, seems useful and proper, though it may not be indispensable. And none who are sincerely desirous of doing honor to the great Head of the church will hesitate to give the most decided and open avowal of faith in him, at any time and in any way which is not inconsistent with that freedom of conscience where-with Christ has made them free, or that modesty and delicacy of feeling which must always accompany humble and deep piety.

The result of our inquiry is, that no more ought to be required by a church now for admission to its fellowship than was required by the inspired apostles; that the sum of what they required was a general knowledge of the purport and design of the Christian revelation,—a profession of repentance for sin, of belief in Jesus Christ as the ap-

pointed Saviour and Guide of men, and of subjection to him as their Lord and Master. These qualifications being found, and this profession being made, and its credibility not being overthrown by scandalous errors in belief or practice, the church is bound to receive any who ask for admission, without applying tests of human invention to prove the sincerity or try the opinions of the candidate.

“We may imagine,” says a very judicious, though somewhat quaint writer upon this subject, “it would be best to have a rule by which we might be able to distinguish characters, so far, at least, as to secure a good majority of true saints in every church. And I know not but we have such a rule; nay, I believe we have, if such a rule be best. Some think it would be very desirable if they could keep all hypocrites out, and admit all true Christians; that so church-members might have little to do with one another but to enjoy themselves, and keep one another warm and comfortable, undisturbed by perils among false brethren. I doubt not but that Christ could, if he had thought proper, have furnished his churches with such rules, and gifts of discernment, and have so guided and influenced them in their determinations and conduct, that not one hypocrite should be able to creep in. But, since he has not done it, we may be certain that the ends he had in view in the institution of visible churches would not be served by stricter and more distinguishing rules than those we have. If we should imagine that we could, from our experiences, observations, and philosophy, spin and

weave finer sieves than that coarse riddle which the gospel has provided, it would not be lawful for us to regulate our conduct by any rule but that of the gospel. It is not the will of Christ, nor for the interest of his kingdom, that churches be more pure than a due observance of his ordinances would make them. The house of God needs vessels of wood and earth, as well as of gold and silver. Who knows but that the door of the church is made so wide, that many unconverted persons might have access to gospel-ordinances, and by them be savingly turned to God? Who knows but that it is the design of Christ, that there should be such in the church as will furnish frequent occasions for using the ordinances of discipline, that so they may not sink into desuetude; that churches be kept watchful, and show their zeal in reproving scandalous offences, and their charity in restoring with the spirit of meekness such as are overtaken with a fault; or, if any should remain incorrigible, that others may be awakened and warned by such examples to take heed lest they fall? If we wish to screw up the gospel-rule a whit straiter than it stands, if we refuse one unconverted person who is regularly admissible, we counterwork Christ's ends; and we have reason to expect that we shall be frowned upon, as those seem to have been who have pretended to form pure churches." *

* Dr. Hemmenway.

CARDINAL CHEVERUS.

Lecture delivered before the Portsmouth Lyceum, Feb. 8, 1842.

As I was passing through an obscure street in Boston many years ago, at a late hour in the evening, I encountered a decently-dressed female, who was weeping bitterly. Upon inquiring into the cause of her distress, she told me that she had been turned out of doors by a brutal husband, and knew not where to go to spend the night. From her brogue, I knew that she was Irish; and I endeavored to persuade her to go to her priest, and seek refuge or advice from him. At first she refused to go; nor was it until I offered to attend her myself that she, with much reluctance, consented to follow me to his house. Late as the hour was, not knowing what else to do with my charge, I knocked at his door. He soon came to me, and I told him my story. The woman had slunk into a corner. He spoke to her; but she would not answer nor come forward. At length he procured a lantern, and came to her. As soon as he saw her features, he said, "Ah, woman! you have brought this upon yourself; but come in, while I go and see your husband, and try to get you out of this trouble." He then took her by the hand, and led her into the house; and, at near midnight, set off to find the

enraged husband, and try to reconcile him to his offending wife, who, he told me, had, by her own faults, alienated him from her to a degree which had, for the first time, shown itself in the present outrage.

This incident first brought me acquainted with JOHN LOUIS CHEVERUS, at that time curate of the then newly established Roman Catholic Church in Franklin-street, Boston, of which M. Matignon was the superior. In the short time which I that night spent with him, I received an impression respecting the character of the man which has almost formed a standard in my mind for the true Christian pastor ever since. It is surprising how deeply impressions are sometimes made by occasions of this sort, and brief interviews like the one of which I have spoken. All have felt them; and, although the wise soon learn to distrust them, and to conceal them until further observation can be had, yet, when they are confirmed by after-examination, they always afford a subject of pleasant recollection, and of a sort of self-gratulation, which many reverse experiences do not counterbalance. There was something in the tone, manner, and words of the Catholic priest to that woman, which so spoke of dignity with simplicity, — of kindness with reproof, — of authority with love, — that, had I never seen him again, I should have thought of him continually as I read of Fenelon or of Oberlin; and, had I never known his name, I should have recognized his character amid all the French drapery of the Memoirs of the Archbishop of Bordeaux.

I should have thought of him as I read of Fenelon; not that Cheverus was all that Fenelon was, but their hearts were cast in the same mould. In Fenelon there was a spirituality, going out from and rising above the world and the body, communing with God and with spirits, as it were, face to face. So Cheverus, too, was spiritual. He conversed with spirits; but it was through the face of man that he saw them. Fenelon, with men, was the tender brother, the loving father,—a man with an angel's soul; alone, he was the angel conversing with fellow-angels. Cheverus was never "out of the body;" but he never forgot the immortal spirit, of which the body is the living temple. He was the minister to men as they are. Fenelon lived for his own day; but he was in spirituality far before it. The richest legacies of his mind were for after-ages. Cheverus lived for his own age. His work was for the day as it passed; but with him time and eternity were one. His legacy to posterity is the memory of an example of active benevolence, of unselfish devotion, which might be a model for men or for angels. Its study would much benefit some philanthropists, whose love for men seems kept for men as they ought to be, and as we hope they may one day be, not as they are; who stand above and call, saying, "Come up hither," but stoop not to lift their brethren, as well as invite them.

Cheverus and Oberlin, too, were brothers. But we see Oberlin only as the good pastor of La Roche. Cheverus we behold the ministering priest to the

poor Irish exiles of Boston, or the missionary to the degraded Indians ; and also as the Bishop of Montaubon, — the Archbishop, — the Peer, — the Cardinal. But through them all, and above them all, we see the man, the Christian man, the same. Every touchstone applied to him, be it of flint or of diamond, proved the pure Christianity of his soul.

This is the man of whom I wish to speak to this audience. I have ever loved him from my first interview. For years I beheld him as the devoted servant of God, amid the earlier scenes of his ministry. I have traced him, in the distance of his native land, to the high pinnacle of the church, upon which he at last stood ; and I have read with interest his *Memoirs*, as they have been recently presented to the world, where, notwithstanding all the frippery of French eulogy by which they have been disguised, I have recognized the delightful features of the man. It is my humble wish not to offer you a new portrait, but to take the one which perhaps most of you have seen ; and, by stripping it of the paltry gilding of its frame and setting, to induce you to look with more pleasure upon lineaments which no panegyric or false coloring can wholly conceal.

I shall venture to give you but an outline of facts and incidents. The philosophy of such a life demands an abler pen than mine to do it justice.

Cheverus was born in the year 1768, of highly respectable parents, in the small city of Mayenne, in France. As we should have supposed, even had not his biographer told us the fact, his mother was

“one of those rare women who thoroughly understood the education of her children: yet she had no confidence,” we are told, “in the employment of a particular system; the best, in her opinion, being the simplest and most Christian.” Was there ever a greatly good man who had not a good mother? Was there ever a man so bad that he had not one good emotion when he thought of his mother?

Although his parents were eminently religious, they do not seem to have attempted to direct their son in the choice of a profession; yet, at so early an age as eleven years, he exhibited a predilection for the ecclesiastical state. Nor is this early expression of choice to be wondered at in a land and in a church, where, to be decidedly religious out of the church, or rather out of the priesthood, is a thing scarcely thought of. As is too much the case among others than Catholics, the desire of becoming devotedly religious, or decidedly the servant of God and his Son, is at once connected with entering the clerical profession; as if to dedicate one's self to the cause of piety as a layman were hardly to be thought of.

The desires of the future cardinal, however, met the ready and joyful encouragement of his mother; and, at the age of twelve years, he received the tonsure, or shaven crown, which marked him to all who saw him as dedicated to the church. His wishes, even as a child, to become connected with the church do not seem to have been excited by its showy ceremonies, or the honors of the priesthood. He pursued with the greatest ardor those studies

which were to fit him for the labors and duties of his profession. At the age of thirteen he left the paternal roof, and entered the college of Louis le Grand, at Paris. Here commenced a fiery trial for the young devotee. This college was among the earliest of the French seats of learning to imbibe the then rapidly spreading philosophy, which was in a few years to cover France with an avalanche of crime and misery. The governors of the institution had opened the sluice-gates of evil, by removing many of the restraints upon the students, and relaxing the discipline so needful for the healthy growth of the young mind. Idleness and inattention were but the precursors to licentiousness and infidelity; and many were the efforts to enlist the new comer into their ranks, and by ridicule or blandishments to turn him from the quiet but rigid practice of the rules of his faith, which he resolutely but modestly pursued. Such, however, was this modesty, and his entire amiableness of manner and temper, that he compelled the esteem and affection even of his turbulent companions, and implanted in them impressions of respect for himself, and for the few who sympathized with him, which were not forgotten, when, years after, amid the horrors of the revolution, fellow-students of Louis le Grand recognized each other perhaps in the relative positions of the judge and the accused.

But the piety of young Cheverus could not be at peace in such abodes. He soon procured a transfer of the place of his studies to the Theological Seminary of St. Magloire; where, under a severer disci-

pline and a life of more seriousness and study, he could better fit himself for the holy state to which he aspired. Among the good Fathers of this place of religious instruction, and his well-regulated fellow-students, he seems to have found all that was congenial to his spirit. "Blessed years of my seminary life!" he was wont to exclaim; "the happiest of my existence; when my duties were so light, my hours so serene, my soul so tranquil, and every one so kind, so indulgent, towards me."

While in comparative seclusion the young student was fitting himself for his holy office, the storm which was to render that office the post of the highest danger was fast rolling together its clouds of horror. Foreseeing its approach, the earnest friends of the church were anxiously looking around to see upon whom they could count to stand by its sacred fabric when those clouds should burst. Perceiving the devotedness of Cheverus, and knowing how useful a priest of his character might be in such critical times, the bishop of his diocese obtained from Rome, without his knowledge, a dispensation for his want of age, and urged the young abbé to take ordination at once. Perilous as the position was, his firm courage did not waver; and at the age of twenty-three he took orders as a priest, at the last public ordination which took place before the Revolution.

After his ordination, he immediately set out for his native city, and celebrated his first mass on the night of Christmas, 1790.

The succeeding two years were passed amid the

trials and persecutions of the Revolution. Driven from the church, the resolute priest administered the rites of his office in private houses; offering consolation to the sick and dying; preaching and admonishing wherever he could find ears to hear; hiding to-day from threatened death, and to-morrow again risking life in the most fearless manner, for the discharge of some official function, or act of Christian benevolence. But soon the time arrived when his Master's injunction must be obeyed,—to flee from certain death, when death could bring no fruit to the cause which he loved. Yet gladly for himself alone would he have laid down his life in the sacred cause in which so many of his brethren fell. "How ardently I wished," said he, after having almost miraculously escaped the massacres of the second and third of September, "how ardently I wished for a bullet to place me by the side of so many martyrs!"

But this happiness, as he then would have thought it, was denied him; and at the close of 1792 he embarked for England, with a great number of his fellow-clergymen, who (under the decree of 26th August, compelling them to go into exile, or to take the oath to the constitution) preferred banishment and poverty to a violation of their consciences.

We now find our young priest a stranger in a strange land, with no earthly dependence but a few francs in his purse, and a willingness to labor; ignorant, too, of a word of the English language. And here it is worthy of note, that, when he was

in the seminary of St. Magloire, he had for a fellow-student and friend a young Englishman, who was very desirous of teaching him the English language, and giving him some knowledge of English literature. "It will be of no use to me," said Cheverus: "my destination is for the church, and I must not give my time to the gratification of a vain curiosity." Who can say how much cause he may have to lament the omission of an opportunity to add any knowledge to his stock, when it can be done, as in this case, without neglect of other duty? Of what knowledge, except of evil, can any one say, "It will be of no use to me"?

Forlorn as his situation was, Cheverus did not allow himself to distrust for a moment the goodness of God. He now set himself vigorously to acquire the language, that he might gain a livelihood, were it even by bodily labor; with his usual disinterestedness refusing to share the succor which the English government, with noble generosity, tendered to his exiled countrymen, in order that there might be more for others, who, he said, were more needy than himself. In a few months he had acquired sufficient knowledge of the language to obtain a place as instructor in French and mathematics in a boarding-school, and from his scanty salary devoted a large portion to the assistance of his companions in misfortune. But Cheverus never for a moment forgot the sacred cause to which he had so early dedicated himself. He obtained permission from the Catholic bishop of London to preach, and soon collected around him a

little congregation of English Catholics; and, in less than a year from his landing in England, he delivered his first sermon in English. Anxious to discover if he had been understood, he asked a man in very humble life what he thought of his sermon. "Your sermon," he replied, "was not like other sermons; there was not a single dictionary word in it, all might be understood;" an eulogium which he was always fond of remembering and quoting to young preachers.

England, however, abounding with exiled priests, presented not room enough for the eager desire of usefulness which ever warmed the bosom of Cheverus. Although in a residence of three years he had formed attachments and obtained a situation of great comparative comfort to himself, he felt that he was not doing good enough. "I am too well here for a priest," said he: "I have nothing but enjoyment." He felt that, while so many nations were sitting in the shadow of death, they might some day rise up, and reproach him for remaining where there were more than enough teachers, instead of carrying his ministry to places comparatively destitute.

Receiving about this time a letter from the Abbé Matignon, whom he had known as a former professor in the Sorbonne, and who was now stationed as priest at Boston, and as missionary to the eastern tribes of Indians, in which he stated the wants of that station, Cheverus resolved to embark for America, and co-operate with his worthy friend in the work of bringing spiritual counsel and comfort

to the scattered Catholics of that wide country, and in the apostolic labor of converting the wretched savages upon its borders. This work of self-sacrifice was strongly opposed by those about him who had learned to appreciate his talents and esteem his character. "Ah, my friend!" exclaimed one, as he embraced him on his departure, "was it it, then, only in order to convert savages that you wrote such beautiful dissertations at the Sorbonne? Why go to bury your talents in the woods?" But no selfish or ambitious feelings could deter the devoted missionary from his purpose. He arrived at Boston in October, 1796, and was received by the good Matignon (a kindred spirit in all but courageous and active energy) with open arms, as an angel sent from heaven to his aid and comfort.

Once settled in his new office, he applied his whole time and talents to his work. He found, indeed, no use among his Boston congregation for "such beautiful dissertations as he wrote at the Sorbonne;" but he found full scope for the exercise of the humility and charity with which his breast was filled. The Catholics of Boston consisted, almost exclusively, of the Irish emigrants; most of whom were, then at least, of the lowest orders,—the class who, even at that early period, had begun to wear the channel which has since poured such floods upon our shores. These, and some few families scattered in Maine and in other parts of New England, together with the poor remnants of Indians in and about the eastern extremity of Maine, formed the beginnings of the future dio-

cese of the Bishop of Boston. To them he devoted himself. Assuming the mild authority of love, he won, over the heretofore turbulent and dreaded mass in the purlieus of the town, an influence and a controlling power, which, much more than the bull which the Pope afterwards sent him, entitled him to the name of "Right Reverend Father in God." He was a father indeed to the poor, the wretched, the degraded, — ever uniting with the salutary authority which he exercised for their good, a parent's care and sympathy for their temporal concerns and sorrows. In times of unusual distress, from the severity of the season, the prevalence of an epidemic disease, or when a new wave of emigration broke upon him with its usual accompaniments of misery, — then might Cheverus be found, by night and by day, at the forlorn dwelling of the poor, at the bedside of the sick or dying; not to offer words of spiritual consolation alone, but to watch by them, — to lift their emaciated bodies in their beds, — to minister to their lowest wants with a humility which seemed unconscious of any sacrifice, with a tenderness which might almost be honored with the title *womanly*. He thought of almsgiving alone, where more could be done, as but a secondary charity. "The prophet Elisha," says he in a charity sermon, "at first sent his servant to lay his staff upon the child, but all to no purpose. It was not until he came himself, took the child in his arms, and breathed into it his own breath, that the limbs were warmed. So with our charities. As the dew refreshes the earth, parched by the burning

sun, so is the kind word better than the gift to the soul withered and scathed by misfortune." "To bestow alms unkindly," said he on another occasion, "is to dissolve a pearl in vinegar."

Among the Indian subjects, too, of his spiritual guardianship, he acquired a most powerful influence. He went down to them in all their degradation, that he might lift them up to light and life. If their extreme debasement defeated his best hopes, he seems to have elicited, even from the squalid remnants of the eastern tribes, some scintillations of their native brightness. Exposed in one of his missionary tours, with two of them, in a birchen canoe, to imminent peril, he spoke to them of their danger: the reply, though less arrogant, will compare in classic beauty with that often quoted, "Fear nothing; you carry Cæsar and his fortunes!"—"With you, my father, no fear; without you, fear."

A friend (who, I believe, now hears me) has related to me a striking incident of his minute care for and knowledge of the affairs of his extensive flock. This incident took place after Cheverus became a bishop, and thus proves that his early as his later dignities made no change in the man. My friend had occasion for a young but a trustworthy servant to attend him on a foreign voyage. Finding some difficulty in obtaining a suitable lad for his purpose, he was advised to speak to the bishop to assist him. An answer to his request was promised in a few days; during which interval, as my friend afterwards ascertained, he had been mak-

ing inquiry as to *his* character, as suitable to take charge of a young lad in this way. At the next interview, he promised to procure such a youth as was wanted, provided my friend would pledge his word to have him well treated, and returned in due time to his home. This was promised; and a boy from an indigent family was engaged. The bishop, however, requested that he might be permitted to remain with his parents until the time of sailing. It was at early daylight, on a freezing morning in December, that preparations were making on board the vessel for leaving the wharf. The boy had not come on board; and it was concluded, that, after all, he had deceived his pastor, and would not come. But soon the good bishop was seen hurrying down the wharf, leading his young charge by the hand. Taking his future master into the cabin, he made him renew his promise to watch over the boy as a father, and to return him safely, God willing, to his country and friends. Then, kneeling upon the cabin floor, he commended them both to the protection of Heaven, and, giving the child his apostolic blessing, left the ship.

It would be instructive to trace still further the course of this true missionary of the cross through his many toils and anxieties in the early part of his ministry in America; to see how powerful was the influence of his Christian humility,—his soul-felt and life-exhibited love to God and to God's children,—in breaking down the prejudices of the sturdy descendants of the Puritans against the Popish name.

It would be delightful to recall even personal recollections of his slight form, and humble yet dignified countenance, as he wended his way on his errands of mercy; or, as he might often be seen, arm in arm with Protestant clergymen, joining in meetings with them for benevolent objects, and with one heart and one mind with them devising means of doing good. I well remember being present at a meeting held in Boston, for the purpose of forming a society for the moral and religious improvement of seamen (a meeting where a work was begun in faith and prayer, which, though slow in progress, will yet cause the sons of the ocean to rejoice); where might be seen together the faces of Channing, of Lowell, of Buckminster, of Kirkland, and of Cheverus. Between the first and the last, — Channing and Cheverus, — there was a striking resemblance in form and size at least.

But we must be content now to leave this longest period of his ministry, and hasten to view the Christian pastor in other lights.

What we have hitherto seen of Cheverus only teaches us how good, how useful, and how happy, a man may be under the pressure of adverse circumstances, — in poverty, and amid scenes of incessant toil. We have not seen him surrounded by the allurements of high honors, and the dangers of power. Yet these he had voluntarily avoided; for in London, after his exile from France, he was offered, in the family of a powerful nobleman, whom his virtues had attached to him, a situation which would have been enviable to the lover of

ease, and a sure introduction to that refined society of which he was so capable of becoming an ornament. But he preferred the humbler and most laborious post of a missionary to the poor Catholics of America. Soon after he commenced his labors in Boston, he was urgently invited to take charge of the comparatively rich and well-established church of St. Mary's, in the city of Philadelphia ; but he would not leave the flock which had already begun to cling to him as to their dearest friend. So also in 1801, when, under the policy of Bonaparte, — that great spirit, who too well knew the power of the religious principle, whether pure or corrupted, not to strive to prostitute it to his own purposes of selfish ambition, — when, under his decrees, the French church began to arise from its ruins, and her bishops and priests were returning from their exile to re-open her desecrated temples, Cheverus was strongly urged by his family and by his clerical friends to return. Every appeal was made to his love of country and the claims of kindred, until his heart was torn with anxiety. How would it delight him to revisit his beautiful France, — to embrace again his relatives and friends, — to be again united to his first-beloved and widowed church of Mayenne ! On the other hand, how could he leave his beloved congregation and his rising church in America, and his more than ever-beloved friend, the saintly Matignon ? Long and hard was the struggle ; but the sacrifice was made, and he announced to his friends and his people that he would remain among them, sharing their good or evil fortune.

The joy with which this announcement was received throughout the town, showed, in a strong light, how high he stood in the esteem, not only of his own people, but of the inhabitants generally; who felt that, besides his value as a citizen and a friend, it would be a public misfortune to lose his powerful influence over that increasing portion of the population who revered him as a governor as well as a priest.

In 1808 the papal decree was issued, erecting the church at Boston and its dependencies into a bishopric, and naming Cheverus as its first bishop. Sorely against his will had this honor been prepared for him, and awarded by the arrangement of his friend and nominal superior Matignon. Like a true son of the church, he seems to have felt the whole weight of the mitre and the crook, little burthened as were those of the see of Boston with gold or precious stones. In 1810 he was consecrated at Baltimore by Archbishop Carroll, who previously had been the only Roman Catholic prelate in the United States.

For thirteen years more did the good man continue the course of life which has been portrayed in this sketch. The name of Bishop to him was but another title for the friend of man and servant of Christ. But at length the frail body yielded, and his health suffered by his incessant labors. That harrowing disease, the asthma, had become most painfully seated upon him. Matignon, too, his beloved Matignon, so long his fellow-laborer and companion, had been translated, by the mes-

senger of death, to the church in heaven; and his heart was deeply wounded. Under all these trials and depressions, it became apparent that some respite from toil, and a change of climate and scene, were absolutely necessary for the preservation of life.

He had, at the beginning of this year 1823, received from the restored king, Louis XVIII., a recall to France, with an offer of the investiture of the Bishopric of Montaubon. At first he refused to go; but, the summons being repeated in a more urgent manner, and his physicians having assured him that he could not continue another winter in New England without the greatest hazard, he felt that the recall to his native France was, under such circumstances, more a call from God than from the king. He determined to return.

The demonstrations of feeling, when this resolution became known to his people and in the town, were such as few, very few, public or private men have ever been honored with. It would weary you even to enumerate the forms in which the love and veneration which he had secured to himself were manifested.

He embarked for France in October, 1823, carrying with him only the same trunk which he had brought with him to America twenty-seven years before; and leaving all his little acquisitions, the chief of which was his library, to the use of his successors and the church. He was shipwrecked upon the coast of France, and escaped with life in a most providential manner, — thus reëntering his

native land after an absence of thirty-one years, rich indeed in spiritual, but as destitute of worldly, possessions as when he had left it.

If, as I have observed, the life of Cheverus had from its opening to this moment been one where none of the glare of public honor, none of the delusions of wealth, none of the temptations of power, had endangered his virtue,—from this time forward it was an upward path in the perilous course of earthly glory. Had he died Bishop of Boston, we should never have known from *his* life how entirely the gems of humility and love can eclipse all earthly jewels. We might have doubted if even Cheverus could have safely passed through trials more difficult to human virtue than is the needle's eye to the ponderous camel. But we shall see, even by the rapid glance which we must give to the remainder of his earthly course, that he whose eye of faith has been accustomed to rest upon the glories of the celestial crown cannot easily be dazzled by earthly pomp and power.

The first act of the shipwrecked Christian priest was to seek the nearest church, that he might sing a solemn *Te Deum* for the preservation of the lives of his fellow-passengers and his own.

His journey, from his landing-place to Paris, was a sort of triumphal march; so effectually had his good name preceded him, and so ready are his nation to give honor to whom honor is due; or, rather let me say, to whom they may think for the moment that it is due. So high did the popular enthusiasm run in his favor, that there seems to

have sprung up a degree of jealousy in the minds of the greatly mean at the court of Louis; and some difficulty was at that late moment raised about the investiture of the bishopric to which he had been nominated, on the strange pretence, that, having been absent from France more than thirty years, he could not be considered a citizen, or be elevated to a see in the kingdom! Cheverus, mild and meek as he was, was not one who considered a dumb submission to injustice as any part of humility. He immediately wrote to the minister, that if the king, after recalling him as his subject, should now refuse to acknowledge him as such, he would leave Paris at once, and for ever renounce the bishopric of Montaubon. This settled the matter; and the Pope's bull was immediately registered, and sent to him the same day.

As bishop of his new diocese, he entered upon his office with the same devotion which he ever gave to present duty. In his official address upon entering his cathedral, he uttered the warm feelings of a father meeting a beloved family. And here, too, he gave proof of that true Catholicism, which, although spontaneous in his own Christian soul, had been strengthened by his long residence amid our free institutions; a proof which must have sounded strange to the echoes of those ancient walls. Alluding to the Protestants, who were quite numerous at Montaubon, he said: "There is an interesting portion of the inhabitants of this diocese, who, though strangers to our communion, should not be so to our affections. To them also I wish to be a

father, a friend ; happy if it should one day be given me to re-unite them all in one faith, as we should mingle them in our charity." And in his replies to the different bodies who presented addresses to him, among whom were the Protestant ministers, he spoke with the utmost candor and kindness. " I have a heart," said he, " extremely disposed to love, and I wish to be loved."

The same simplicity and earnestness of the Christian pastor were seen in Cheverus in his new position, which had marked his course in a more humble see. He preached in season and out of season ; in his own cathedral, and in numerous other places, where the fame of his happy eloquence caused him to be invited, and followed by crowds. Observing the profound ignorance, even upon the elementary truths of religion, which existed among the higher as well as lower classes of his native country, he let it be known that he should preach every Sabbath at parochial mass, in his own cathedral ; and without apprising his hearers of his intention, but concealing it under some rhetorical formalities, he gave a course of sermons explanatory of the church catechism. When, by the charms of his eloquence, he had excited an interest in these primary truths, so that his audience was always full and increasing, he revealed to them his secret. " Had I," said he to them, " had I announced to you, at the outset, that I should teach the catechism every Sunday, you would have considered it beneath you to attend, thinking it suitable only for children. Now for

six months I have done nothing else, and these instructions have interested you. Learn, then, that the simplest truths of religion are important to old as well as young, to the learned as well as the ignorant. All may derive benefit and instruction from them."

But Cheverus soon found the difference between acting upon an elevated and a humble stage. He pursued at Montaubon the same course that was his familiar, every-day course in Boston. But the simple acts of love, kindness, and piety, which as the humble curate or even Bishop of Boston he performed in quiet every hour, he could not do as the rich bishop of a French city, without being annoyed with notice and fame which spread throughout the land. His lowly mansion in Boston was always open to the wayfarer or the destitute; so was the Episcopal palace at Montaubon. He gave away all his scanty income in Boston; he did the same with the more ample revenues of his see in France, but not with the like quiet and peace to himself. And it must not be wondered at; for I apprehend that we, simple republicans as we are, think differently of such an act as his, when on occasion of a great inundation, which overwhelmed one of the most indigent quarters of his city, he opened his palace to three hundred of the poor and destitute, who were driven from their hovels on the river's brink, and fed and housed them until they could return; or when, on the invasion of the cholera at Bourdeaux, instead of fleeing from the danger, he had the still more mag-

nificent archiepiscopal palace fitted up as an hospital, with beds and mattresses in every room and hall, with nurses and medical attendants in readiness, and "House of Succor" painted over its doors; — we do think more of such acts in the Bishop and the Peer of France, than of the same spirit in an humble householder, who perhaps puts himself to more inconvenience and self-denial to shelter two or three unfortunates.

But be it fame or be it scorn, Cheverus acted out his heart's dictates, and cared not. Not so the French public. So great became the popularity of the long-banished prelate, that enough could not be done to show their sense of his worth.

In 1826, on the death of the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, one of the richest sees in France, and second in honor only to that of Paris, Cheverus was named to that high post; and, notwithstanding his protests and exertions to avoid it, he was compelled to accept the honor. At the same time he was created a peer of the realm by Charles X., and, at a subsequent period, received one of the highest titles of nobility which the monarch of France can bestow, being named a commander of the order of the Holy Ghost. To these temporal honors, so universally united with spiritual in monarchical governments, Cheverus was particularly averse, and would gladly have avoided them; but, under then existing circumstances, this could not be done consistently with his highest usefulness to the church. But when, in the revolution of July, the titles created by Charles X. were abrogated, and an exception

was desired by many in his favor, he published a declaration most remarkable for its simple dignity, expressing his joy at being released from all political honors and responsibilities, and his fixed resolution never again to assume them, but to spend his remaining days in the bosom of his spiritual flock, and devoted to his spiritual duties alone. It was during his membership of the Chamber of Peers, which made it necessary for him to come to Paris to attend its sittings, that an incident occurred beautifully illustrative of his character, and which has been related to me by a friend.

A young woman, who had been a member of his congregation in Boston, being in Paris in the capacity of chambermaid to an American lady, then on her travels, seeing it announced in the public prints that the Archbishop of Bourdeaux, Cheverus, had arrived in the city, determined to see her former pastor. She asked permission of her mistress to call upon him, but was told that the Archbishop of Bourdeaux and the Peer of France would not be accessible to her, as had been the Catholic priest of Boston. "I know Father Cheverus better," said she; and she went to his residence to inquire for him. She was told by his servants that he was at the palace, having an audience with the king, would not return until late at night, and was to leave the city early the next morning. She was, however, desired to leave her name and residence, which she did. She returned to her mistress, and was laughed at for her presumption. Late that evening, a man, wrapped in a cloak, inquired in

English for the young woman, as having a message for her alone. After a private interview of a short time, the girl told her mistress that she had seen her good priest once more, and received his benediction. It was Cheverus who had called, leaving his carriage in another street, that he might not be recognized, and might thus see his humble friend alone, uninterrupted by the civilities of the family, which he had not time to receive.

Another delightful anecdote I ask your patience to relate, as it proves that the heart of the true Christian is the heart of the true republican, although it beat under the diamond star or the pontiff's robe.

The archbishop had been solicited by a rich and honorable citizen of Bourdeaux to baptize his child with his own hands. At length he was prevailed upon to grant the request, in spite of his unwillingness to do for one what he could not do for all. As he was about to commence the ceremony in the cathedral, he saw a poor woman, accompanied by her relatives and holding an infant in her arms, waiting at a respectful distance, until she could approach the font, and seek baptism for *her* little one from one of the curates or minor priests. Cheverus immediately summoned the humble family to the altar, and told them that he wished to baptize the unadorned baby, as well as the one loaded with ornaments. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he, with his usual tact and happy eloquence, gave a worthy lesson to both the rich and the poor parents before him. "These two children," said

he, "are equally great in the sight of God,—equally honorable and equally dear to him. Both are destined to the same glory in eternity, though they are to reach it by different paths: the rich one by the charity which will succor and console his wretched brethren; the poor one, by an humble and laborious life. If heaven be hereafter open to him who suffers, it will be because he has led a life of patient submission; if to him who gives relief, because he has shown himself compassionate. To be generous will be the virtue of the one; to be grateful, that of the other. And," added he, "both must begin from this very day to fulfil their destiny. The poor child cannot, indeed, yet ask kindness, and his heart is as yet unconscious of gratitude; but I will be his interpreter, and take upon myself the debt of gratitude for all the good you shall do him. The rich child cannot give, and his heart is as yet unacquainted with generosity; but you," said he, turning to the numerous and brilliant assemblage by which the infant was surrounded,—"you are his representatives, and ought to assume the duty of being charitable and generous for him. Such charity is the greatest proof of tenderness you can give him: it will sanctify his entrance into life, and cause the whole course of it to be blessed by that God who does not call himself in vain the Father of the poor." He then made a collection for the poor child, to which, it hardly need be added, the wealthy group pressed eagerly forward to contribute; and both parties left the church with happy

hearts, and tears of gratitude to the good archbishop.

The touching eloquence of this address, and the wonderful aptitude to see and apply a sudden incident to the happiest effect, furnishes a fair specimen of a talent which Cheverus possessed in an eminent degree, and by which he gained much of his power over others. Thus his eloquence in the pulpit—almost always extemporaneous—was the true eloquence of the heart. His sparkling eye, his rapid enunciation, his unstudied but most expressive gesticulation, could not be witnessed even once and be forgotten. There was about him a spiritual magnetism, if I may be pardoned the expression, which awoke in the soul feelings unknown before, or, if known, seldom so delightfully excited.

Such, and a thousand others, were the acts by which the name of Cheverus became the theme of enthusiastic eulogy, remarkable even in enthusiastic France. Not that matters of higher dignity, in the common use of that word, could not be related of him. His course amid the troubles which agitated France in 1829 and 1830,—which resulted in the overthrow of Charles X. who, whatever were his sins, had appreciated the character of Cheverus,—his noble renunciation of political honors by his declaration of August, which has been alluded to, and the advice which he gave to the infatuated king and his more infatuated ministers on more than one occasion of difficulty, manifested a quick perception and a wise discernment, as well as a

moral courage, sufficient to prove that the priest might have been the statesman, had he believed that he could do more good in that capacity, and to give harmony to his character in all the high stations to which he was called.

But the unfortunate man, I had almost said, was destined to bear a still heavier burden of honors. Unfortunate certainly did he esteem it, that he could not do all honor to the cause of religion and to the church which he deemed identified with it, and yet remain the humblest servant of both. The wise monarch of the Revolution, watchful for every expedient to strengthen the popular throne, soon discovered that an honor done to Cheverus would add a strong pillar to that throne. Although Cheverus was an undisguised adherent of the fallen dynasty, from two of whose kings (Louis XVIII. and Charles X.) he had received high distinction, Louis Philippe hesitated not to write to the Pope, soliciting for the favorite prelate of France a cardinal's hat. When the rumor of this design reached the ears of Cheverus, he was greatly distressed ; and he wrote urgently to the ministers of the king, and also to Rome, begging to have the nomination withdrawn. But the request of the French king was too much in accordance with the feelings of the Pope, who had long honored Cheverus with his friendship, to be rejected from regard to the humility of the archbishop ; and it was resolved that the dignity should be bestowed as soon as France should assign to the cardinal's office a revenue in keeping with its due honors. This was immediately done ; and, in

February, 1836, he was proclaimed cardinal, and invited to Paris to receive his investiture from the king's hands.

And now we behold the humble priest and missionary,—whom, so few years before, the log-hut of the outcast Indian, and many a miserable hovel of Boston, had welcomed familiarly to its scanty fireside,—invested with all the pomp and riches of the highest place, save one, in the most splendid hierarchy in the world; and already spoken of as the future Pope!

But to Cheverus, duty, obedience, alone could make all this pomp endurable. From the hour of receiving the tonsure, he gave himself, body and soul, to God and the church; and, through them, to his fellow-men. For God and the church, he was willing to be abased; and, if need were, to be exalted. But to him grandeur, authority, riches, brought, in themselves, no happiness. Of the nothingness of human glory, he was too deeply impressed to find in it any satisfaction. "What boots it," he said, "to be enveloped after death in a red, a black, or a purple shroud? How can we attach any value to human things?" "Oh, how gladly," he exclaimed to some young students of Saint Sulpice,— "how gladly would I exchange this red cap for yours!"

And, indeed, the red cassock of the cardinal proved little more to him than the putting on of the funeral shroud. After the pompous ceremony of his investiture, he set out from Paris, returning to his diocese by way of Mayenne, in order to give

his native city the delight of beholding one of its sons invested with the sacred purple. After his public entrance into Bourdeaux, he commenced a series of journeys throughout his whole diocese, exercising the numerous and fatiguing functions of a burdensome ritual, and preaching on all occasions where he could hope to add the effect of his high position in the church to his own simple eloquence, for the advancement of piety. For several weeks he pursued this course, with no cessation of labor or exposure. At the end of this time, he returned home, completely prostrated,—a prostration which but foretold his speedy release from all labor, and his introduction to eternal rest.

For a long time it had been his desire that his death might be sudden. He was anxious to spare those about him the trouble and solicitude occasioned by protracted sickness. In the Catholic litany is the petition, "From sudden and from unprepared-for death, deliver us, Lord." Cheverus always omitted the first branch of the prayer. He had desired that his death might be sudden. His prayer was heard.

On the 14th of July, only four months after his induction to the cardinalate, he was struck with paralysis, which at once deprived him of all consciousness; and, although breathing continued for four or five days, the soul, as if ashamed that its frail companion should cling for a moment longer to life, refused all further intercourse with the body.

During these few days, masses and prayers for

his recovery were incessantly said in all the churches. Indeed, all occupation but that of prayer seemed to be suspended in the city, and as far as the news of his danger could be spread; but all in vain.

On the 19th, high mass was celebrated in the chamber of the dying cardinal. At that point where the Romish ritual has studied to concentrate the full power of this wondrous ceremony in one awful effect upon the human mind,—at the very moment of the elevation of the host,—the last breath of Cheverus, softly, and without a struggle, went forth in death!

“I have invited you here,” said Addison on his death-bed, to his skeptical friend, “I have invited you here to see how a Christian can die.” I have asked you at this time to behold how a Christian lives. Very imperfect, of necessity, has the sketch been. And I fear that too prominent a position has been given to what are only parts of the good man’s character. But it must suffice. I have been anxious only to bring out a few of the rays of Christian love which shone in his life. The rays of that gem of heaven dart equally upward, below, and around. Christian love! who shall portray its beauty? who shall define the limits of its power? It is infinite! and he in whose breast it glows is one with God; for God is love.

Such was the Roman Catholic priest Cheverus. The lesson of charity which is held up to us by the contemplation of such characters as his, in all the varieties of the Christian name, we must not

now stop to read. Such was the Christian man; and let this be our present lesson from his life, — that he who aims with right ambition to be a philanthropist, a patriot, one honored and blessed of men, must, like him, aim first to become in heart, in mind, in life, a Christian.

THE

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER'S OFFICE.

Address delivered before the Teachers, Pupils, and Friends of the Pleasant-street Sunday School in Portsmouth, April 30, 1848.

WHY are we assembled here? The regular services of the sanctuary have been performed; the benediction has been pronounced: still we see that the place of worship and instruction is not deserted. Here are mothers with their little ones, lingering around the altar; parents, who come not alone, but lead their children to the place where they themselves have heard of the Saviour. And here are no mistaken disciples to rebuke them or to drive them back. We have heard the Master's voice, and have learned his mind better: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and who will dare forbid any whom he has invited? And as we behold the blessed Master taking them up in his arms and blessing them, shall not the disciple gladly clear the way, and lead forward the little ones? Above all, shall not the parent press through the crowd, lifting his beloved child to the Saviour's notice, crying, "Bless mine, O my Saviour! even mine; upon this dear child of my love, let thy hands rest; for him let thy prayer go up"?

And is it so? Do we really see Christian parents thus eager to obtain the blessing of the Saviour upon the heads of their beloved offspring? Can it be otherwise? Can there be a Christian parent whose most earnest wish is not to bring his children to Christ? Were that sacred Teacher now on earth, should we see all those who bear his name, and whom we should much offend to ask them if they were Christians,—should we see them now bringing their “little children unto him that he might put his hands on them and pray”?

Christian parent, I think I hear you exclaim, “Yes, oh yes, who would not rush forward to obtain such a blessing? Oh, could his sacred hand be laid on my child’s head, how would my heart rejoice! how would my love and gratitude gush forth towards him!”

But we see not his mild and benevolent countenance beaming upon us. We hear not his voice cheering the parent’s heart, as he beckons the children to his arms, saying, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Why, then, have we assembled here? I trust it is because we believe that sacred assurance which he gave, as his bodily form ascended out of sight, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” I trust that we all believe, that whenever we gather together in his name, there he is yet in the midst of us; and may we not hope that there are now present many who have come in the spirit of those mothers and fathers of old, who brought their children unto Christ that he might touch them? Wherever there

is such a parent, wherever there is such a desire, wherever there is going up such a prayer,—oh! upon the child of that parent may the touch of the divine Saviour rest, and sanctify its young spirit, and make it now, and hereafter, and for ever, one of those “of whom is the kingdom of heaven”! And if there be any here who have hitherto thought too little of this greatest of blessings for their children; who, it may be, have toiled, and are willing still to toil, to supply them with the meat that perisheth, but have forgotten or neglected to provide for them that which endureth unto eternal life; may the Holy Spirit now touch their hearts, and awaken them to a sense of their sad mistake, of their guilty error! “Suffer little children to come unto me,” said the Saviour, “and *forbid* them not;” and can it be that a parent can forbid his own child? You would be filled with horror at such a thought, did you now hear the voice of the blessed Jesus. But is not that voice calling to you from this sacred volume? Does it not reach you from the sabbath-bell, even if you do not come to hear it from the pulpit? Does it not come to you from that same bell, as it tolls forth the funeral knell of some youthful victim of the great destroyer? “But forbid them!” you exclaim. “Do I forbid them?” Yes, parent: if your example in the neglect of holy things is continually before your child; if he sees that religion has no charms for you; if he never sees you open the book of the Saviour’s teachings, or hears your voice going up from the family altar, can you say that you do nothing to keep your child

back from the extended arms of his Saviour and yours? You may not forbid him in words; but you do nothing to bring him, and, by every negative influence which you can exert, you hold him back. You suffer him not to go to him who is kinder to him than father or mother.

But, I repeat it, we will trust that, in our assembling here, we have delightful proof that the Saviour's voice is heard. Does not this crowd of youthful forms, surrounded by the thoughtful and affectionate faces of elder disciples, testify that the call is obeyed? You have come up to the place where Jesus has put his name, and you have brought your children to present them to the Lord. You have done well; and be assured, that, in so far as you have brought them with the heartfelt prayer for his blessing, that blessing will be given. You have brought them hither, that you may obtain the aid of your Christian friends to help them to make their way to Jesus; and such friends, we hope, you will ever find in this sabbath-school. Here, we trust, you will ever find those who will unite their prayers and their efforts with yours for your children's good. But, O parent! remember that we can be only helpers; we cannot if we would, nor would we if we could, take the solemn responsibility from your hands. We never can supply a parent's sacred place, or possess a parent's power to educate these children for heaven. Nor, surely, would you have us do so. Would you consent to look to a stranger, however kind or able, to feed and clothe and educate your child, even in worldly things, with

no oversight or direction from you? If not, surely you will not expect or desire that their spiritual nourishment, their religious education, should come wholly from another's hand.

But let me ask you, my children, and my young friends, Why are we assembled here? You have come to school, you will say. But this is no common school. You have not here the studies which occupy your week-day hours. You call it a Sunday-school, — a school for religious instruction. And what is religious instruction? What do you come hither to learn?

My children, let me ask you to pause for a moment in the multitude of thoughts which are always coursing through your minds. Let me ask you to pause for a moment, and give me an answer to this question; or let me help you to answer it; for, be assured, it is a most momentous question.

Did it ever come into your minds to ask yourself what you are; where you came from; and whither you are going? As you are passing on from day to day, rushing from this thing to that, from one amusement or occupation to another, — or as you may sometimes lie awake in the quiet watches of the night, — does it not occur to you to ask yourself such questions as these?

If you will but allow yourself to consider, you will see that you have a wonderful and curious body, full of life and motion; and that you have within that body a still more wonderful mind, that thinks and plans, and directs your body what to do and how to move. While your body, however strong

and active, can go but a little way at a time, your mind, your thoughts, can fly over hundreds and thousands of miles in an instant. Your body can do nothing of itself. You perhaps have seen the body of some one of your young companions carried to the grave ; but you know that that body was not your former friend. You know that his soul, that mind which directed all his actions, which taught his tongue what to say, his countenance how to look, had gone before the body was laid in the quiet grave ; and have you not sometimes longed to know what has become of that soul ; whether it still lived ; whether it was happy ?

Now, it is about the soul that you come hither to learn. It is about the soul that Jesus Christ came to tell you ; and this holy book, the Bible, from which we teach you here, contains the words of Jesus. Here he has revealed the glorious truth, that these souls of ours are capable of living for ever and ever ; that they will never die as our bodies do ; and that they are capable of everlasting happiness,—of happiness that shall be for ever increasing. But he has also told us, that our souls cannot be thus happy, unless we keep the laws of God ; that, if we disobey those laws, if we sin against God and do not repent, our souls must be for ever lost. And then Jesus tells us what those laws are, and he promises us his help that we may be able to keep them ; and, more than all this, he tells us, that, although we have sinned,—as we all of us have,—yet that, if we are penitent and come to him to save us, God will forgive us our sins and

restore us to his favor. Yes, this kind and gracious Saviour, God's own beloved Son, came down from heaven, and suffered and died, that he might bring these glad tidings of great joy.

And, now, is there any child here too young to understand that these things are of unutterable importance; or who, if he will only stop to think, will not wish to know more about them? And this is the very purpose for which we invite you to this school of religious instruction. It is for this that Jesus Christ invites you to come to him. Why was it, think you, that the blessed Saviour, when he was upon earth, took so much notice of little children? Was it for their beautiful and innocent looks? Not for these alone, pleasant and delightful as they are; but it was because he could see in each of them the ever-living spark; because he knew that every little child there might become an angel of light, — might live and rejoice for ever before God's throne in heaven, after its little frail body had turned to dust. It was for this that he desired to take them by the hand, and lead them to their Father and his Father in heaven. And so is he now ready to take you, my children, by the hand; for he loves you as well as he did the little Jewish children of old. He is also willing to take you by the hand as you grow up, and come forth into the world; as you become young men and young women; as the cares and the temptations of the world grow stronger and stronger. And, charming as it is to see little children, in their sweet simplicity, learning to know their Father in heaven, and look-

ing up, as it were, into the face of Jesus for a loving smile, yet I must confess that a higher joy and a brighter hope spring up in my heart when I see the face of the intelligent youth filled with thought and respectful attention, as he reads his Bible, or listens to his parent or his pastor or his teacher while he speaks to him of holy things.

Mark you that boy whom on the sabbath, as well as on week-days, you may see lounging about the streets or the wharves, his face staring with rudeness, his mouth full of oaths and filthy language, his hands clenched for the fight, and his feet running to the mob or to the riot; — mark you that unhappy girl, strolling along with unmended clothes and unwashed hands; or that vain thing, pranked out in her new colors, with her face simpering and gazing only for admiration, and with no thought that rises above the fluttering insect which she resembles; then behold that brother and sister walking together to the house of God as the sabbath-bell rings out the call to worship; see them take their places in the sabbath-school, and welcome their kind teacher with a smile, and join in the exercises of the day with a cheerful seriousness and devout attention; — mark these different classes of children, which we may continually see about us; and which of them do you feel must be the happiest in themselves, the most worthy of the love and respect of others, the best hope of society, and, above all, sure of the approval of God?

Follow these children a few steps further in life. What places do they fill among our young men

and young women? Whence come our street and corner loungers, our noisy brawlers, our dangerous and most pitiable female objects of compassion and sorrow? Are they not our boys and girls of a few years ago, to whom the common school and the sabbath-school were hateful; who were strangers in the house of God, and to whom the sabbath was a mocking? And whence come our faithful Sunday-school teachers; the decent and lovely inmates of our houses; our honorable and industrious mechanics and merchants; our happy and beloved heads of new families, filling up society and the church with fresh ornaments, as the aged and the hoary head sinks away and goes to its rest? Are they not from such ranks as have in childhood stood around the good parent's chair, and heard of Jesus and of heaven; as have bowed with him at the family altar; and such as, we trust, now fill the seats of this sabbath-school?

To which class, my children and young friends, — to which class would you belong, now and hereafter? Now is the time for you to choose.

It is not needful to ask you, my fellow-teachers, why you have assembled here. This is the place and the hour towards which, I trust, your happiest thoughts and warmest desires are directed. Even through the week, when the common duties of life occupy your hands, doubtless your minds often revert to this place of your solemnities. At least, in the morning and evening prayer of your closet, your classes here have a constant place. You have come now to meet these young immortals, whom

you have pledged yourselves to help onward in their way to heaven. You have come, I trust, with prayerful hearts ; for you have come to take a high and a holy place as teachers of religion. Teachers of religion ! Is there not something almost awful in the name ? An office upon which the greatest minds and the greatest souls have entered with trembling, may well cause such as we are to hesitate.

A teacher of religion ! Do you shrink from the title ? Perhaps some of you may not consider yourselves to be professors of religion. In the technical sense, if I may so call it, you may not be so. You have not perhaps received the waters of baptism, or taken your places at the Lord's table. But do you come to these classes to teach what you do not yourselves profess ? Do you tell these children of obligations to God and to Christ, which you do not feel to be binding upon yourselves ? Surely you would not be so inconsistent. By your very act, then, you profess yourselves willing and desirous to be the true disciples and followers of Christ, as you tell these children that they must be. Before God and the world, therefore, you have made a profession of religion, and are bound to see to it that you act up to that profession. I do not say, that, to be a teacher in a Sunday-school, one should feel ready to make that more formal expression of self-dedication which is usually termed a profession of religion ; but I do say that none should take upon themselves this office, who do not mean, deliberately and honestly, to let their whole lives and

conversation be consistent with the Christian name ; and to strive to teach, by a pure and reverent example, as well as by the lessons which their lips utter.

Do you say that such views as these will frighten from our ranks many of our most ready and useful teachers ; that the young and the cheerful will go back, and leave the school to those who cannot sympathize with the joyousness of youth, who will show religion only in its sombre clothing, and make it unattractive to childhood ? Far, very far, be it from me to take one tint from the bright rainbow of youthful hopes and feelings. I would rather make those tints brighter and more permanent, by pointing them to the bow of promise which religion alone can bend over their heads. Libel not your holy faith by saying that it is inconsistent with cheerfulness and joy, and all that is happy and pure in this life, and that it offers only the promise of the life to come. Far be it from me to discourage the young and happy from taking part in this sacred work. They are, and have been, among its chief and best promoters. When we have asked in vain for help from the mature in life, who should best know the worth of religious education, we have seen the young come forward, and devote their sabbath-hours kindly and cheerfully to the work ; and we have given God thanks. We have seen among them multitudes who have done honor to the sacred employment, and whose lives have borne testimony to their sincerity.

We say now, as we have always said, that it is

much to be desired that parents — that fathers, who usually can if they will ; and mothers, where they leave not still higher duties — should come as teachers, and bring their children to be united in the class with those less favored than their own, with those spiritual orphans of whom there are so many always among us ; thus giving a practical illustration of the brotherhood there is in Christ. Yet we say, that we would not spare the young as teachers. If they have loving hearts, they can come home to children, as older teachers hardly can.

And why should we drive back any, by saying that to be a teacher is to make a profession of religion ? Why should it drive you back to tell you of the importance of the office which you undertake ? Only come to your duties in the spirit of humility. Come not trusting in your own strength ; for, if you do, you will assuredly fail. Come not carelessly, or because you see your familiar companions doing so ; and oh ! as you love your own souls, and as you would tremble to endanger the souls of others, come not for mere display, or to pass a pleasant hour, or to get the praise of men. But come humbly, with a desire to do good ; determined to be faithful in your preparation, and punctual in all your engagements ; with a loving and a patient spirit, and with a spirit of prayer which includes all the rest ; and you will be safe, you will be happy, in your employment. The hand of Jesus will be extended to welcome you ; and to you, humble and lowly as

you are, he will give the same charge that he did to the great apostle of old, — “Feed my lambs.” O teacher! can you hear this commission, and not be faithful?

Come with the spirit of prayer. Here is the Christian teacher’s rod and staff. And, to have the spirit, you must have the form. Forms may exist without the spirit; but with us weak mortals the spirit will soon go out, if it be not embodied in words, and marked by times and seasons. “It is important to urge this,” says a most judicious writer; “for there seems to be a notion growing into favor with some, that, as the spirit and not the form is the essential thing, it is better not to be burthened with methods and rules, but simply to pray always; which there is reason to fear would in practice be found a precept to pray never.” Fail not, then, if you would keep alive the spark from the altar, — fail not of the stated morning and evening devotions of the closet. When you seat yourself to prepare for your sabbath-lesson, pray for heavenly wisdom to guide your thoughts and your inquiries. As you enter your little class, cast your eyes upon the young immortals before you, waiting for your word of instruction, warning, and encouragement; and let your heart go up in secret, earnest prayer for help in your weakness. Prepare thus, and come thus to your work, and you will not fail. If you succeed not in bringing the peace of God to others, his peace shall be upon your own spirit.

But, once more, be persevering and faithful to-

wards every scholar. Let not the pleasant and bright pupil engross your chief attention, or win your partial favor. Such often need your efforts least. It is the poor, neglected children of ignorant, perhaps of vicious, parents, — unattractive in person, degraded in manners, — who most require your aid, and demand your patience. It is pleasant for any one to foster and train the beautiful flower or shrub; but to eradicate weeds, or prune the crooked and ungainly plant, is less delightful; yet such may become your brightest trophy, may bear the most glorious flower. Be diligent, forbearing, full of loving-kindness and hope. Remember how little it becomes a sinner like any of us to be impatient or unforgiving towards a little child. Oh! were our divine Teacher to be as strict to mark our negligences, our perverseness, our backslidings, as we are to mark those of our pupils; should he say of us, as we are too often ready to say of them, "We can do them no good; let them alone," what would be our fate? Where should we now be, for whom the day of grace is still shining, and the day of probation lengthened out? Be firm and uniform and dignified in the government of your class: require order and obedience; for, without these, no good can be done. But, if we would be "children of the Highest," and win souls unto Christ, let us "be kind unto the unthankful and the evil," as well as to the obedient and the docile.

But I fear that I have detained you too long. If I have spoken strongly, if I have spoken freely and plainly, bear with me, I pray you; for on such

a subject and on such an occasion, I may well be supposed to feel a deep and earnest interest. For more than half of my life I have been personally connected with a sister-institution to your own. The present season completes thirty-three years since I assisted in the formation of the first sabbath-school in this town. Almost on this spot, and in a building which now forms part of that which stands next to your house of worship, I met a little band of Christian friends, and a beloved pastor now in heaven, to discuss the question if it were expedient to form a sabbath-school for the benefit of the poor and neglected children who then infested our streets and wharves on the holy day. It was resolved that the experiment should be tried for one year, — doubtful if we could obtain teachers willing to give their sabbath-hours to the work, or if we could induce children to attend. Since that time, I have not ceased to labor — God knows how imperfectly — in the cause.

Outwardly, the experiment — for such it was at first — has not failed. Hundreds of teachers and thousands of children, not of the poor and destitute alone, but from every class and portion of society, have filled the seats of these schools. How far their high and holy purpose has been carried out, — how far the ideal of them has been filled up, we may not now discuss; nor, indeed, can it ever be known but to the all-seeing Eye which discerneth the hearts of men. But the institution has taken its place fully and firmly among the modes of implanting the Christian religion in

- the world. The school-room stands beside the church, and the influence of its teachers must be second only to that of the sacred ministry.

But, Christian friends, there is one institution, there is one church, that must ever take the precedence of any which meets in the school-room or the sanctuary. There are teachers and ministers, God-appointed, who must fill well their offices, if the ways of Zion are ever to rejoice in the multitudes which come to her holy feasts. That institution is the family; those priests are yourselves, Christian parents; that church is, in the words of the apostle to Philemon, "the church in thy house."

Let me, then, close as I began, by an appeal, in the words of another, to you who stand at the head of those fountains, from which, if from anywhere, must flow the streams that shall "make glad the city of God."

"The church in your own house," — the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, the lambs which the chief Shepherd has bid you feed, — will you be faithless to the trust? Will you resign to other pastors the work which God has made first of all your own, and has raised up others to be your helpers only, not your substitutes? The day is coming when the chief Shepherd shall put to each of you the solemn question, 'Where is the flock which was given thee, thy beautiful flock?' Will you prepare yourselves then to confess with shame, 'I left them to whosoever would take the crook from my hands, to random,

wayside influences; I fed and clothed them; I spared no expense for their nurture; but time and effort I reserved for less worthy ends'?

"In that day, those very children may rise up in judgment against you, and say: 'Ye left us as orphan spirits, open to temptation, unsheltered from the assaults of evil influences. No mother's voice taught us the love of God. No father's prayer at the household altar led us to pray. No domestic teachings opened to us the words of life, and placed us at the feet of Jesus; and here we are, lost, ruined spirits,—our sin laid for ever at your door, our blood upon your skirts.'

"No, Christian parents, prepare not for the judgment-seat, for a dawning eternity, these appalling interviews,—these harrowing remembrances. Feed the church which God has planted under your roof; nourish the lambs of Christ in the name and spirit of the good Shepherd; and hope that, in the day of his appearing, you may find your little flock with you in unbroken numbers at his right hand, and may say with joy unspeakable,—'Lo, here are we, and the children that thou hast given us.'"

INFLUENCE OF HIS OFFICE UPON THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

Minutes of a Speech before the Boston Sunday School Society,
May 30, 1848.*

WHEN your secretary honored me with an invitation to say a few words at this meeting, he remarked that the Sunday-school Society had a right to my services. His remark was true. I never did, and I trust never shall, deny the right of the sabbath-school to any service I can render; and, of course, this society, which has been so efficient a helper to that good cause, has an entire right to call for the help of every friend of the cause. Nor am I disposed to be forward with any doubts of my own whether I can render you service in the way pointed out. If I can, simply by coming hither, show you an individual who has been for more than thirty years an active member of a Sunday-school, and give you the testimony of his undiminished confidence in the usefulness, and his faith in the growing influence, of these schools,—if I can bring to you the assurance of such a one, that he looks upon the call of Providence which made him in his early manhood a sabbath-school teacher, as the greatest blessing of his spiritual life, the greatest

* The speech, as delivered and reported, coincided only in part with these minutes.

— blessing to himself, — then possibly some service may be done, by inducing others to enter themselves upon the same roll, or by reassuring some who may feel discouragement creeping over them.

And such testimony I can bear, and I rejoice to bear. With a disposition far from sanguine, indeed with perhaps a morbid sensibility to discouraging circumstances, I have watched these institutions through that long course of years. I have been fully alive to the dangers, earlier and later, which have been feared by their friends and prophesied by their enemies, from the incompetency of teachers; their tendency to perpetuate sectarianism and the evils of false doctrine, and to engender among the laity captiousness and spiritual pride; the lessening of domestic instruction and parental responsibility. I have seen and deeply felt the discouragement which their slow progress, and the little effect produced by them upon the face of society and in the church itself, are adapted to cherish; and often has my heart sunk, and my faith wavered. But yet, and after all, as I look upon them from the point of view which years and experience have given me, I can declare, that never in my earliest days of ardor and hope was my belief in their value and usefulness firmer or more cheerful. Never was my opinion stronger, that they ought to be encouraged, cherished, strengthened in every possible way, by every Christian pastor and every Christian layman, and by every true patriot and philanthropist.

There is one element of usefulness in these insti-

tutions, which perhaps has not been so much thought of as it should be, but which, for myself, I esteem among the highest and best, — I mean their influence upon the teacher himself, and, through the teacher, upon society. In some remarks of a writer who stands in the highest rank as a scholar and as an observer and friend of society, he speaks of these schools as being instrumental in “diffusing much improvement and happiness, and extending a valuable influence even to the teachers themselves.” Had this excellent man been himself a practical teacher, as he should have been, I think he would have pointed out this influence upon the teachers as a primary, and not as a collateral or incidental benefit only.

1. In accepting the office of a Sunday-school teacher, what is done? Is it a less decided way of making a profession of religion than the one commonly so called? Is it less plainly an acknowledgment of faith in it, love for it, and obligation to obey it, to become a teacher of religion, than simply to sit among its disciples, and silently partake of its ordinances?

If, then, it is desirable that we should place about us the fencing from danger, — the excitement to watchfulness and duty, which the common mode of “professing religion” affords, — why should not even greater benefits arise from a mode which to forms adds action, immediate and definite, calling for, and opening the way to, greater knowledge and ever-growing interest; supplying oil to the lamp the more copiously, the longer it burns?

2. Another invaluable advantage to the teacher is the direction which such an engagement gives to his reading, especially his sabbath-reading; the distinct and definite aim which it offers to his attention; the effect in making his reading a study, instead of the desultory, superficial mode which one is too apt to acquire, without some opportunity to call into immediate use the knowledge obtained from books. Most especially is this true in respect to the Scriptures. Whatever may be the experience of others, I must certainly say of myself, that, before I became a Sunday-school teacher, I never read the Bible as it ought to be read, and must be read, to be understood and enjoyed. No book is so much read, and proportionably so little studied, as the Bible. But, when called upon to explain, we must seek to understand; and then begin to beam forth, from words and passages which heretofore, from their familiarity to the ear, have palled upon the mind, light and life and beauty and power before unknown and unthought of.

3. Then, too, there is the opening, or, if open, the keeping alive, in all their freshness, of the sympathies of life, especially with the influences, I had almost said the sanctifying influences, of childhood. The scenes and occupations of opening life, which succeed our school-days, soon damp the beautiful glow of school-day affections. There is danger that an engrossing worldliness, or the worse attractions of sensual pleasure, will soon tarnish and destroy the simple tastes of childhood. But the teacher, in his intercourse with his scholars,

lives on in all the good of his boyish days; and, amid the fresh bloomings of childhood, he becomes himself "like one of these." And where so well as among his associates in a holy charity can he find materials for those tender and enduring friendships which make the purest joy of life now, and will reach on to eternity?

4. Then, again, we can hardly attach an inordinate value to the preparation which the position of the Sunday-school teacher gives for other modes of usefulness. Who knows better or feels more the wants and claims of those who by the common world are neglected and forgotten? Where can we look with so much confidence for recruits for the noble army of reformers as to the ranks of Sunday-school teachers? And in our churches whom do we find so well-fitted and so ready to be the right-arm of the church, the bearers-up of the pastor's hands, as those who have served their apprenticeship in the Sunday-school?

And these are only the outward advantages of the teacher's position, which the world can see, and of which society partakes the benefit. But the teacher's heart will tell him of others, of soul and conscience, — blessings "which the world knows not of," but for which he will thank God every day of his life. The smile of the bright face of the child, as he joins his teacher in the class; the grateful words of the afflicted mother, as she meets him at her sick child's bedside; the warm pressure of the hand, — the rough, hard hand, it may be, of some sailor-pupil long absent and perhaps forgotten, who

comes to the old school-room to thank him for kind lessons of years gone by ; — these things and their like will far outweigh much of tediousness and long-suffering from the impenetrable, the incorrigible, and the ungrateful ; and all these the faithful and persevering teacher may have, and heaven besides.

Is it said that these advantages and blessings are only for the long-experienced and devoted teacher ? It is true that none can inherit the blessing, unless he wrestle for it ; none can be crowned, unless he strive, and strive lawfully. But they have become the reward of many who entered our lists with comparative coldness and indifference, but who have found the service an awakening one, and who have continued for love an employment which they began perhaps from mere good nature, or even some lower motive. Some such have doubtless fallen back, but perhaps have carried an arrow in their hearts which may send them to our ranks again. We have yet to see the one who has felt himself injured in the service ; we have never yet heard the individual who would express regret that he ever joined a Sunday-school.

I ask any one to look round upon the corps of Sunday-school teachers, past and present, who have already been raised up by this institution, while it is yet in its comparative infancy ; upon the amount of intellectual talent which is brought, even now, to bear upon the moral and religious education of our youth, — talent, in many cases, which money could not purchase ; upon the in-

fluence of that blessed array of female excellence enlisted in its service; and then to say if the influence of our schools through their teachers, as well as their pupils, is not worthy the attention of the well-wishers of society. I speak not of our own denomination alone; far from it. I think that our chief hope must rest on laymen, especially on laymen belonging to this love-engendering institution, to break down the walls of sectarianism in the church. They have not the fetters of professional bias upon them; and, when they are left at liberty by the higher powers of the church, I have almost always found among them a free, liberal, and brotherly spirit, and a candid estimate of the substantials, as compared with the technicalities, of religion.

It is, therefore, when the office of the Sunday-school teacher shall have obtained its just rank in the estimation of society, or of the religious community at least, that we shall see these schools what they can be and should be. It is when some Horace Mann of Sunday-schools shall have aroused the public mind to their importance, and vindicated the dignity of the office of their teachers, that we shall see more of such men as we ought to see pressing into their service, and supporting, as they ought, the noble list of female teachers who already honor our ranks and bless the cause.

Before sitting down, I would embrace this, my first and last opportunity, of saying one word of cheering and encouragement to my fellow-teachers. And could I utter the word as it swells in my heart,

it would go forth with power. But it is not needed here; for I speak to those who know. I can only say, Christian friends, persevere. Depressing thoughts may sometimes come over you, as you view the mountain-walls of depravity and ignorance which fence up some portions of your path; but fear not the result. Remember, God marks progress on the records, not of time, but of eternity. He will not fail in his promises to those who are not weary in the work; but the faint-hearted and the desponding cannot reap. Man is ever impatient for results;—Providence is never in a hurry. Be hopeful; have faith in God; have faith in children; persevere in love.

ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE AUTUMNAL CONVENTION,

October 7, 1861.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, — I am deputed by the members of the South Church and Society in this ancient town of Portsmouth to bid you welcome!

The welcome of Christians to Christians — of the members of one Christian society to their brethren and sisters of other Christian societies — ought to have a meaning, a greater depth of significance, than the words of common hospitality or of common friendship. And such significance, such depth, I feel authorized to say, has the welcome which we tender to you this day. We welcome you to the walls of our Zion, to the place of our solemnities which our souls love, to our domestic altars, and to our hearts.

We welcome you as those who come to encourage and strengthen our hands, — to excite us to a livelier, holier zeal; we meet you that we may take sweet counsel together, and warm one another's hearts; and we will pray together that He who of old met the disciples in the way would join us, "open to us the Scriptures," and "show us the things concerning himself," until our hearts "burn

within us " with a deeper glow of love to him and to one another.

Our ears have heard of, and in some instances (I wish it had been oftener) we have joined in, your pleasant meetings in other places; and we have rejoiced in the belief that they have been attended with good. We feel it to be accordant with the spirit of our Puritan institutions that our churches should occasionally thus meet together,—meet on a common level, separated not even by the elevation of the modern pulpit above the pews, and known by no distinctive titles but the comprehensive one of brethren in Christ Jesus. We feel that the outward show of veneration for classes, more observed of old than in latter days, is well replaced by the honor that comes from love,—from that love which friendly intercourse and mutual respect alone engender.

We welcome you, Christian friends, with the living voice, and we extend to you the living hand of friendship. But we believe that there awaits you within these walls a welcome purer and more exalting than the living can offer. We know that, as you have come up hither, some of you, at least, have had on your minds the names of those with whom you can commune only in spirit. Such communion, we believe, you may and will enjoy here. From the spirit-world we venture to announce a welcome to you!

Compared with some churches of much younger date, we can point to but a short catalogue of pastors whose names would bring interest to the per-

sonal recollections, even of the oldest among you. For if to the eighteen years of our present ministry we add the quarter-century of our still-lamented Parker, and the more than half-century of the venerable Haven, we are carried back almost to the beginning of liberal things in theology. Still, should we make no mention of Emerson, of Shurtleff, of Strong, and of Alden, names not yet obliterated from the rolls of the church, and only add to the light that now shines in our golden candlestick the brightness that encircles the memory of Haven and of Parker, we know that you will call us rich, and allow that we invite you to a glorious company, whose spiritual presence, we trust, will bless our meeting.

You have been accustomed, at these gatherings, to receive the right hand of fellowship from more than one sister-church. We are alone. There is only one Unitarian church in Portsmouth; but, thank heaven, there is more than one liberal church. We have room for you all within our house of worship; but the hospitality of many a social hearth besides our own is tendered to you.

We welcome you amidst peace and good-will in the churches. No censorious spirit, no jealous eye, we believe, will here watch for our halting. For this we ask you to unite with us in gratitude to God, and in honor to the memory of men who have gone to their reward after sustaining the heat and burden of the conflict, and after leading lives of holiness and charity which have put to silence the voice of bigotry and ignorance, and given rest

to the churches. And sure are we that no voice or feeling in our discussions here will disturb that peace in which we rejoice, or expose us to the charge of forgetting the courtesy which we claim, or of failing in that affectionate respect and love due to true Christian piety and Christian liberty, under whatever form they may appear, or fail to appear.

Once more we bid you welcome, not to the outward trappings of hospitality, — for we are not rich in them, — but to our homes as they are, and our hearts as they ought to be.

NEW-YEAR'S ADDRESS TO THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Jan. 4, 1862.

WE wish to say a word to you on this first Sunday of the new year; at least, to give you our accustomed wish of a Happy new year! We have no new year's present for you; for we could not find a suitable book within our means to give to so many of you. Our kind friend who compiled for us so quickly last year "Gems gathered in Haste," and who said he would try for this year to have for us "Gems gathered at Leisure," has been too much occupied in preparing valuables for other people to be able to do that work for us, though he assures us of his great regret that it has been so. Thus we have no new year's gift for you; but we have that which ought to constitute the chief value of such a gift,—our hearty love for you; our kindest wishes, our earnest prayers for your present and future, your highest and best good. These we give you truly, heartily. Will you accept them? Listen, then, patiently and attentively to a word or two of advice and admonition which we would offer you.

When, on Wednesday night last, you were about to retire to rest, and remembered that it was the

last night of the year, did not some serious, solemn thoughts come across your minds? Did not some of you say to yourselves, "Another year of my life has closed; and what have I been living for this year?" Did not some pensive feelings creep over you, as you looked back upon the little you had done to make yourselves wiser or better? As you now look back upon the year that is gone, do not many wrong things that you have done come up into your minds? do you not remember many omissions of duty? and can you think of these things without pain? You are too young, most of you may imagine, to have such thoughts as these. But why too young? If you can understand my questions, you are not too young to put such questions to yourselves. If you are not too young to notice the passing away of one year and the opening of another, you are not too young to think and feel something of the importance of time to you as well as to others.

There is nothing which so much prevents our making any impression upon the young, or our getting a good influence over them, as the notion which they often have, that their thoughts, their actions, and their feelings, are of no consequence. "They are so young;" "They do not mean any thing;" "They do not think;" "By-and-by they will be older, and then they will see the necessity of being more sober and thoughtful, and of leaving off their trifling and foolish ways, and of overcoming their bad habits." Thus do grown persons sometimes talk, and thus do young persons

often seem to feel with regard to themselves. But how long is this to continue? How long may a young person go on in the ways of trifling and thoughtlessness, and then turn about and become all that is right? Is that little child who is so disobedient and turbulent and unmanageable now, to become, when he is a young lad, an obedient, quiet, and industrious scholar? Is that disrespectful, negligent, idle young boy, when he becomes a young man, to be civil, thoughtful, and virtuous? But, more than all this, is that little child, whose lisping tongue has never learned to say, "Our Father who art in heaven;" that young lad or young girl, who rises in the morning and lies down at night forgetful of the Creator, knowing nothing and caring nothing for his holy laws; or is that young man or woman whose thoughts are all upon pleasure and self and show and the world,—are these the ones, and these the materials, out of which are to be made the valuable members of society, the hopes of the church? Are these the beings by whom heaven is to be peopled, and eternity enjoyed? When is the "by-and-by" that is to see the change? The year opens, and it closes; and "what is their life?" It is the same shadow, the same vapor, which changes its form and shape, but is as empty and vain as ever.

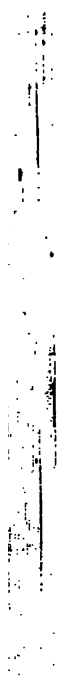
But, my children and my young friends, you are not thus deceived. You know better. Even the youngest of you, if you will only think, are perfectly well aware, that, if you now neglect the days of early childhood, if you now indulge in what you

may call little sins of childhood, so surely as your bodies are growing from year to year, will those sins grow. Just as surely as the little boy or the little girl will be a man or a woman by-and-by, just so sure is it that the little sinner now will be a great sinner hereafter, if he does not stop and repent of these "little sins."

Another year has gone. Every one of us has advanced one more stage in life, and has one year less to live,—an oft-repeated, but yet a solemn thought. As we have been most impressively told, we ought to inquire, especially at such seasons as these, "What is our life?" Can it be possible that these wonderful bodies, and these more wonderful minds and souls of ours, were made only for the life that at longest lasts but threescore years and ten, or a few more, of labor and sorrow? It cannot be. Then, for what were we made? For what are you living, my young friend? You, fair and beautiful in the morning of life, daughter of affectionate parents; and you, the son of many a care-worn day and sleepless night, what are you living for? Is the fleeting life that now is, all that we have to hope for you? God forbid that it should be so! Arouse yourselves, then; feel that you are immortal beings; feel that yours is the morning of an eternal day, if you will but improve the morning that is now given you. But neglect it, and your sun may go down at noon. You may perhaps live on through your mortal day; you may grow old as a mere animal,—a creature of this life: but neglect the morning of your spiritual

life, and you may die a spiritual death before your earthly days are half spent. A tremendous thought, but I believe a true one. Let the departed year, then, say to you in its dying echoes, — let the glad voices of the opening year say to you: "Now, and perhaps only now, is the accepted time. Now, and perhaps only now is the day of salvation."

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS.



MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Notes of a Series of Sunday-school Lessons, given in the Summer of 1829.

I.

In the course of general instructions which it was proposed to give from the desk, it was mentioned that the order of the lessons which are usually given in the classes would be observed. Accordingly, the first series of remarks was made upon the subject of prayer, and in explanation of the Lord's Prayer, which you know is the first thing we teach you. We then went through the several questions in Dr. Watts's small catechism, which has always been given for the next regular lesson in the classes. We now come to the Ten Commandments, which it has always been our practice to place next in order after the prayers and the catechism.

In the Ten Commandments we enjoy the privilege of having in a very peculiar sense the words of God himself; and this is quite a different thing from learning a catechism. Catechisms are drawn

up by imperfect men, who may indeed intend to take all they teach from the Bible ; but they are liable to error as well as ourselves ; and we are to receive what they teach, only so far as it exactly agrees with the Bible. And although catechisms are very convenient and necessary to teach young minds the outlines of religion, yet, as soon as we are old enough, we are all solemnly bound, and most especially we who are your teachers are most solemnly bound, to examine for ourselves, and see that every catechism which we learn, and every book which we read, and every sermon which we hear, agree with the Bible before we receive them as truth, or give them any authority whatever. The Bible — the Bible alone — was given by God to be our guide. And what good men have written to help us to understand the Bible we should read and study as we have opportunity ; but to the Bible we must go at last to prove all. And, although there are thousands of great and glorious things in the Bible, which we shall find out the more we study it and think about it, and which wise men and good men have always been studying, and yet have never found them all out, yet the great and important things which are absolutely necessary for us to know for our happiness and our guidance in duty, — all these are perfectly plain even to the most ignorant, if they will but read the Bible with a sincere desire to know the truth.

I said just now that the Ten Commandments, which we are about to consider, are given us more especially than almost any other part even of the

Bible, in the very words of God. We read occasionally of God's speaking by a voice from heaven ; but generally his communications to men were made through prophets and holy men, to whom he appeared in visions, or, in various ways, put into their minds what to say or to write. But, when he gave these commandments, he seems to have taken every measure to attach the greatest solemnity and importance to them, by the grandeur and sublimity of the way in which they were delivered. He had previously sent Moses to the Israelites, and had given them several messages through him ; but now, as you will see in the account I shall read to you, he gave notice that he should come down upon the mountain Sinai upon a certain day, and speak to the people of Israel, as it were, face to face, under circumstances the most solemn and impressive.

Most of you, I presume, but not all, know something of the history of the Israelites. They were a nation or a people of whom we speak as we do of any other nation now, — as the English nation, the French nation, the Russians, or the Americans. They were called Israelites from the name of one of their principal ancestors who was named Israel. They were therefore very often called the children of Israel. This nation had for a long time been subject to another nation, called the Egyptians, very much in the same way as the poor negroes, who were originally brought from Africa to this country (and are therefore called Africans), are subject to our nation in some of the States. The Egyptians

made slaves of them. But, when God saw how wickedly they were oppressed, he determined to deliver them. So he sent Moses to them to tell them, that, if they would obey God, he would be kind to them, and lead them out of Egypt into a rich country, where he would give them plenty of good land for themselves, and make them very happy. The Egyptians were very unwilling to let them go away, and would not consent until God brought many troubles upon them, so that at last they were obliged to let them depart; and the Israelites set off to go to the place where God had directed them; and they were led by Moses.

After the Israelites had been out of Egypt about three months, they came to a mountain called Sinai. Here God told Moses to inform the people that he would give them a new proof that he was a great and glorious God, and that he was their King and Ruler, and the only true God. The Israelites had been so long in Egypt, where the people were all idolaters, and they had been so cruelly oppressed, that they had become extremely ignorant, and almost as bad as the Egyptians; having nearly forgotten the true God, who was the God of their fathers. So God saw fit to show them, in a great many wonderful and miraculous ways, his glory and power, that, on their first setting out, they might be deeply impressed with reverence and fear of him, in order to keep them from falling into the sins of which they were so fond. As I said before, he had spoken to them several times before by the mouth of Moses, his servant; but

now he told them that he would appear in the sight of all the people, and give them some laws with his own voice; that they might afterwards know that whatever Moses told them from him was true, and that they were always to obey him, as he was sent by God.

Before I go any further, let me caution you to remember, that, when we speak of God's coming down upon the mount, or of his appearing to any person, or of his being in heaven, or in any particular place, or of his coming or going, we speak of him thus because human language will not permit us to express ourselves in any other way. But you must never forget that God is everywhere. He does not have to come or go, to be here or there. I wish very much to have you feel that you are always in the presence of God. He is now in this house; and, if he pleased, he could at this moment give just such signs of his being present as he did on Mount Sinai or in the Jewish temple. We should then say that God had come down to us; but he would no more be here than he is now: only he would be giving more manifest signs of his presence.

Another thing, too, we must always remember; that, although we often read of God's appearing to men, no form or shape of him was ever seen. God is a spirit; and, when we speak of his being seen, it is only by some of the glorious or dreadful signs which he gives of his presence, as by the burning bush, when he first appeared to Moses; by the fire and the smoke and the thick cloud upon

the mount, or by the bright and beautiful light and cloud that went before the Israelites : it is by these and such signs that he appears. As Moses says, in speaking of it a long time afterwards in Deuteronomy : “ Ye saw no manner of similitude on the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.”

Let us now read the solemn and sublime account of the giving of the commandments, as we find it in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus.

II.

You remember that I told you last Sunday, that the Jews had long been living among the Egyptians ; a people who were in the habit of worshipping idols of various kinds. They paid homage to serpents, to certain kinds of quadrupeds, to some of the most odious insects, and to images made by themselves ; thinking that these things were gods. They had lost, by their folly and wickedness, the knowledge of the only true God. And the Israelites, by living among them, had become too much like them, although their pious ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and many others, had handed down to them the truth about God as they had received it themselves. Now, the chief design of God, in bringing this people out of Egypt and making them free, was that he might keep them as a peculiar people, separated from other nations, in order to preserve a knowledge of himself and of

his will in the world. Just as if we were now to send a missionary into a country where the people knew nothing about the true God, and were accustomed to all vice and wickedness; and this missionary should take a number of poor children, and put them together into a school, where he could have them always under his own eye, and out of the way of the evil examples which they had been accustomed to see among their countrymen. He would give them rules and regulations suited to overcome their former bad habits, and to keep them always in mind of the true things which he was trying to teach them; and this he would do, so that by and by these scholars might be able to go out and teach others. So it was with the laws which God gave the Israelites, when he had brought them out of Egypt, and separated them from all other nations. A great many of these laws were made only for the particular circumstances of these people. But, to keep them separate from surrounding nations, others were founded on such general principles as made them applicable to everybody, and suited to all times. This is the case with the Ten Commandments. For instance, one of the commandments is — “Thou shalt not steal.” Now, it was wrong for the Israelites to steal; but it is no less wrong for us to steal. And so of all the other commandments: they were given to us as well as to the Israelites, and were intended to be for ever binding upon all men. This, Jesus Christ has told us; and he is our great Law-giver. And all of the Jewish laws that he sanc-

tioned and approved as binding upon his disciples, make a part of the laws which he gave us. The Ten Commandments he again and again refers to in the New Testament as intended to be binding upon all his followers; and moreover he explains them, and carries them out a great deal further than the Jews did, as you will see in the Sermon on the Mount, &c., and as will be shown in the course of these remarks. We are now prepared to consider the commandments which God pronounced upon Mount Sinai, as applicable to ourselves and to all men while the world shall stand.

III.

The *first* commandment is — “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

The great danger of the Israelites, at the time the commandments were given from Mount Sinai, was that they would fall into idolatry, to which they had been so long accustomed in Egypt, and would thus prevent the grand purpose of God in bringing them out of Egypt; which was to teach them the knowledge of himself, the only true God, and through them to keep alive a knowledge of himself in the world. The first commandment, therefore, which God gave them was, as we have read, that they should have no other gods before him.

But, in order that they might keep this commandment, it was necessary that they should know who this God was; and, to teach them this, God

had sent Moses, and was now showing them, by the signs and wonders which he wrought before them, that he was a Being very different from the objects they had been accustomed to see worshipped in Egypt, which were mere blocks of wood or stone, or poor, dumb animals. And in order that *we* may be able to keep this commandment, we must learn to know who God is; and for this purpose you have the instructions which are given you in the Bible. For this purpose it is that we first of all endeavor to teach you who God is, what kind of a Being he is, and how worthy he is of your love and worship; for we know that it is in vain to tell you that you must love God, if we do not give you good reasons why you should love him.

Thus it is in the first catechism which you are taught here; it is asked you: "Have you learned to know who God is?" "God is a spirit," &c. "Who made you?" "The great God," &c. "What does God do for you?" "He keeps me from harm," &c. God, then, is a spirit, whom we cannot see, but who sees us, and knows us and all things. He can do all things. He made us; he made the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them. He keeps us from harm by night and by day, and is always doing us good; and this is the Being who commands us to have him for our God, and to have no other God before him. Now, children, let each of us ask ourselves if we have ever thought whether we would have this great and good Being to be our God. He is and must be our God in one sense; he is our Maker and Governor, and we are entirely in his power;

but he commands us to decide if we are willing to have him for our God. It is not sufficient to say that we have no other God; or to think that we have God for our God, when we think so only because we feel that we cannot help ourselves. This is not what God commands, or what he is pleased with. He wishes us to receive him of our own choice; for else we cannot love him. And I think I shall show you, in considering the second commandment, that you can and do have "other gods," if you do not choose this God. Everybody has some god; that is, something that he loves more than every thing else. So that, if you wish to keep the first commandment, you must, of your own free choice, decide that you will love and serve and obey God, and will permit nothing to prevent your loving and serving and obeying him. For what does our Saviour Jesus Christ say of this commandment? How does he explain it? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."

And why does our Saviour call this the great commandment? Is one command of God greater than another? He calls it the great commandment because it includes all the others. Christ says (you very well know, for all of you who have learnt the commandments have also learned the summary of them which Christ Jesus gave), — he says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: on these two commandments

hang all the law and the prophets," — which is the same as I have said: they include all the rest. Our Saviour here speaks of the two classes of the commandments: first, those which relate to our duties to God directly, — as the four first; then, those which relate to our fellow-men, who are expressed by the term "our neighbor," — as the last six. Now, what our Saviour says amounts to this: The first and greatest duty we have to practise is to love God with all our souls; for, if we love him truly, we shall certainly do all that he tells us to do. What is our second duty? Why, certainly, to love our neighbors, or our fellow-beings, as we love ourselves. So that the first and great command includes all the commands; for, if we love God, we shall certainly wish to have no other God but him; we shall certainly not wish to make or to worship idols; we shall certainly not take his holy name in vain; we shall certainly be glad to remember and respect his holy sabbath, and rejoice to have such a season to spend in his service, and in learning our duties to him. And, if we love our fellow-men as ourselves, we shall certainly love and honor our parents. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we certainly shall never kill him; we shall never injure his peace or virtue in any way; we cannot steal from him, or bear false witness against him, or covet his possessions. Certainly, then, as our Saviour says, and as his apostles say in almost every page of their writings in one form or another, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." On the two commands, the two duties of love to God and our

neighbor, depend all the law, and all the teachings of the prophets and of all holy men since the world began. Love is the string by which all our duties are united in one beautiful whole: if this breaks, all that is called virtue falls to the ground; is defiled, broken, scattered, and lost.

Thus you see, my children, that, if you keep this commandment in deed and in truth, you will try to learn all you can about God; who he is, and what is your duty to him. You will go to him in solemn prayer, and say to him that you desire to have him for your God and heavenly Father. And you will pray to him to help you to know him, and to love him, and to obey him as you ought; and you will strive with all your might to do your duty to him. If you do thus, then you keep the first commandment.

IV.

The *second* commandment is — “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,” &c.

You may perhaps think, children, that you are in no danger of ever breaking this commandment. You think there is no danger that you shall ever wish to worship a carved image, or bow down in adoration of an ox, or a calf, or a serpent, or a toad, and imagine that they are gods. And yet, children, there are a great many parts of the world where they now do this, as they did when this commandment was first given; and it is only the goodness of God in sending you the know-

ledge of the Bible, and the teachings of his Son Jesus Christ, that enables you to know more than the poor, ignorant idolaters of the heathen world. If it had not been for this goodness, you and I might now be as ignorant and wretched as they are. But with all our light and all our advantages, we, too, may be idolaters. Yes, we may have idols, although they be not of wood or of stone; for there are many kinds of idols besides these. Any thing is an idol to us which we love so much that we had rather disobey God than lose it or give it up. Any thing is an idol to us which makes us forget God, or neglect our duty to him. Any thing is an idol to us which takes up so much of our time and attention that we have no leisure or inclination to attend to our devotions and religious duties. Now, children, after hearing this explanation of idolatry, do you think there is no danger of your ever breaking the second commandment? And this explanation is authorized by the New Testament. We are told there that covetousness is idolatry. Now, how many persons there are in the world who love money, and the things of the world, so much that they seldom think of religion, compared with what they think of getting property and honors for themselves; and who will neglect their duty to God and their duty to men, rather than lose any chance of gain or profit! We read, too, in the New Testament of those whose "god is their belly;" that is, who love nothing so well as to gratify their appetites and passions. And are there none of us whose love of pleasure, and of the little foolish

things of this world, not only sometimes makes us forget God and our duty, but who live for years filling up all our time and thoughts with such things as are of no use to us as immortal beings; and seldom, if ever, thinking about those which are of infinite importance to us as rational and accountable beings? If there are any such, and we must know that there are, we cannot think that there is no danger of breaking the second commandment; but we shall earnestly pray to God to guard our hearts, and help us to keep this law.

You will observe, that, in giving this commandment, God endeavors to impress it upon the minds of the Israelites, by telling them, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation." Perhaps you cannot understand this so well now as you will when you are older, and are better acquainted with the great plan of God's government, and particularly that part of it which related to the Hebrews. But I think that it is now sufficiently plain for you to understand enough for all the purposes of instruction; and, as for all nice questions upon this and other passages of Scripture, I wish to say to the older of you, if any one is ever disposed to trouble you now or in after-life, always remember that every such question can be, and has been, answered and explained in a way to satisfy every fair mind which really desires to know the truth. And, if you do not find yourselves learned enough to settle the matter to your own satisfaction, do not let your faith be shaken by any conceited ca-

viller, who is vain enough to think that he has found out a difficulty which nobody has ever thought of before, and which nobody can explain. But, then, do not rest until, by the help of some friend or of proper books, you have settled such a question in your own mind. Settle it while it is fresh in your mind; and then, whenever it is again started, you will be ready to give an answer which will satisfy yourself, if it does not satisfy one who wishes to find difficulties. You will sufficiently feel the force of the word *jealous* in this place, I think, if you use the word *watchful*; and somewhat in this sense the word *jealous* is not unfrequently used by us: as if it were said, "I am a God who observes your actions, and will reward or punish you as you obey or disobey me." We are always to bear in mind, what we have so often repeated to you, that God, in speaking of himself, uses words which in their full, literal sense cannot be applied to him, but which must be used to give us any idea of this incomprehensible Being. Thus he speaks of his going and coming, when he is everywhere and at all times present. And he here speaks of his being "jealous," when we know that he cannot be jealous any more than he can be sorry or angry in the same way in which a man is jealous or sorry or angry. He means that, having given us good laws, designed to make us happy, he will observe — will take notice — if we keep them, and that he will punish those who do not keep them, and will reward those who do keep them. And, according to the nature which God has given us, the effects of

our doing right or doing wrong, the consequences of our conduct, will in some measure reach to our children, and to those about us, even unto the third and fourth generation. A man who is idle and intemperate, and wastes his property, cannot provide food and clothing, or furnish a good education, for his children. They have the danger of his bad example continually before them, and thus also children feel the effects of their father's sins. If by his sins he brings some awful disease upon himself, his children and his children's children sometimes feel the effects of it in a weak and sickly constitution. But, then, if these children strive to do as well as they can, even under all their disadvantages, they may grow up to be good men and women, and to love and obey God; and then God will bless them, and will make their very sufferings prove blessings to them, by being the means of the better preparation of their characters for heaven, where they will receive more than ten thousand fold for all that they have suffered through the means of their parents' wickedness on earth.

V.

If you have attended to what has been said upon the first and second commandments, you will easily perceive the propriety of the third, as soon as it is explained to you.

The *third* commandment is — “Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord thy God in vain; for

the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain."

In vain means, in a general sense, to no purpose, for no end. Any thing which is done for no purpose, for no design, either good or bad, is done in vain. And it is not a little remarkable, that the very answer which most wicked persons give when you reprove them for swearing, is the very thing which convicts them in one way of breaking this commandment. "Oh!" they will say, "we did not mean any harm; we meant nothing." Well, then, you certainly broke the third commandment. If you used the name of God for nothing, you certainly took his name in vain. And it seems to be one principal design of this commandment to prevent this very irreverent and idle way of alluding to the great God. False swearing — the appeal to God to confirm any thing false — is undoubtedly forbidden, and likewise all sorts of profane use of the holy name; but it does seem to me that a very prominent, if not the chief, design of this command, is to forbid a loose, irreverent, idle, and profane way of using or alluding to the name of God. And the effects of such a habit are of bad consequence enough to justify an especial command against it. How is it possible for those who have any right and proper views of the glorious character of God, lightly or thoughtlessly to take his name into their mouths! We must think that a person who can speak of this great Being without seriousness and reverence either knows nothing of him, or else has by degrees hardened himself in sin to a great ex-

tent. I do not mean that we must always look gloomy and sorrowful when we are speaking about God. Oh, no! if we feel as we ought towards him, we shall delight to speak of his goodness and his mercy; and, whenever we think of him, we shall feel a cheerful though reverent love towards him. But does the person who takes his name in vain, think you, ever have such feelings towards him? Did any body ever know a devout and pious swearer? No, indeed! it is impossible; for, before a person can throw off his natural fear of God so far as to form a habit of taking his name in vain, it seems to me that he must be very far gone in almost every other sort of sin to which he has been tempted. I am sure I can hardly recollect ever knowing a boy, at least, that would use profane language, who would not lie; and I hardly ever knew a boy that would lie, who would not steal, if tempted to do so. For it seems to me that if one can commit a sin to which there is no temptation but mere wantonness, he would readily fall into any sin for which there was a temptation. A child may be tempted to take a thing which does not belong to him; he may be tempted to tell a falsehood to conceal a fault, or to obtain a gratification; but what should tempt him to use profane language? what good does he get by it? what pleasure does it give him? Why is it, then, that our ears are sometimes so terribly shocked by hearing the awful language, not of wicked men only, but of children,—boys; yes, and alas! of girls sometimes,—of the lowest and worst kind only, I believe, who

hardly know the meaning of some of the dreadful words they use, but who know enough to know that they are committing a great sin? I will tell you the only reason that I can think of. These poor, silly, but guilty children have fallen into the company of wicked men; they have heard some poor, ignorant, drunken sailor perhaps, or some miserable wretches, who were quarrelling and fighting, or drinking together,—they have heard these beings use this language, and they, poor, silly, guilty children think it is manly, it is something great, something that sounds grander than other children, to use this kind of language themselves; and so, for the sake of seeming as great and as wise and as grand as a wretched, quarrelling drunkard, they will venture, by degrees, to defy God, to break his commands, and risk the salvation of their immortal souls.

Is there a child who hears me who has ever indulged in this dreadful sin, even in one word? Let me beg of him to stop, and think of what he is doing. Oh! it is most dreadful to hear the language we do sometimes in our streets,—to hear it, too, from little children, and not children only of ignorant, depraved parents, who have never taught them better, but sometimes from children whose parents would weep if they knew that their little boys ever used such words. I have heard of some such children, and have felt as if I ought to tell their parents of it; but have trembled to do so, for I knew how it would pain their hearts. My children, I beg of you,—I beg of you, as you love

your own souls, as you love your parents who are so good to you, and think and try so much to make you good ; I beg of you, as you love — or, if you do not love, as you fear — the great and holy God who made you, not to be guilty of this great sin.

VI.

The last time I addressed you, we were on the third commandment, — “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.”

I do not regret that the conclusion of what I had to say has been put off for a few Sundays ; for I hope that this has been the means of keeping the subject longer before your minds. If so, I shall be very glad ; for I fear the sin of profanity is one of great prevalence ; and the tendency of this wicked habit to harden the mind and deaden the conscience is so great, that it ought to be the subject of frequent admonition among us. For how can we hope to make any impression of seriousness upon the mind of one who is in the habit of using or of hearing the name of God and of sacred things used in sport, without reverence or respect ? Can a child learn to “fear God” who is not afraid to speak his holy name, or to talk about him, with scorn and contempt ? Can a child learn to “love God” who can bear to hear him spoken of in this light, irreverent way ? No : a child who has had any degree of good instruction must be greatly

hardened, very far gone in sinful habits, who can curse and swear, and take God's name in vain.

In what I said the other Sunday, I explained the commandment as it has usually been understood,—as forbidding not only all falsehood, but all kinds of disrespectful, irreverent ways of speaking about God and holy things. I asked you what temptation there could be to this sin,—if it did the person committing it any good; and I could find no cause why it was so common, even among children, except that they thought that the use of this dreadful language made them appear like men. Like what kind of men? Why, like the wretched, miserable drunkard,—the quarrelling, polluted, enraged brawler in the streets. And does any child in the world want to appear like this kind of men?—and yet it would seem so. And we hear, too, some who do not dare to use the name of God in this way, who will say words which they think sound like it, so as to make folks think that they are bold enough to swear! Yes, you will hear sometimes little children, and even more contemptible men, *making believe* swear!—making believe break God's commandment! Children, do you ever love to “make believe” do any thing which you would not love to do in reality, if you could, or if you dared? And is there any child here so ignorant of his Bible, and of what Jesus Christ has told us, as not to know that what we love to do, and want to do, in our hearts, God considers us as having done; and is as much displeased with us as if we did it, except that it does

not injure others as much as if we did it? If a man is angry with his neighbor, and wishes that he could kill him, or burn up his house, and would do it if he were not afraid of punishment, is he any better, in the sight of God, than if he did commit murder, or were in fact an incendiary?

The spirit of this commandment should also make us tremble to use the awful name of God, even in the form of prayer, unless it is with devotion, seriousness, and reverence. Are we never guilty of taking God's name in vain, when we say over our prayers in a hurried, heedless, careless way? I have sometimes been obliged to stop children, when about to say their prayers, on hearing them begin with that solemn appeal,—"Almighty and most merciful God," in a voice and manner which showed how little their thoughts, much less their hearts, were engaged in what they were saying. O my children! how often do we have to pray to God to forgive even the sins of our holy things!

I might go on, my children, to show you the connection there is between the vice we have been talking of, and all low, vulgar, indecent language. They are generally found together. But this your teachers will do, and, I trust, often do; for, if there is any thing that degrades, pollutes, and hardens the mind against all good, and prepares it for all evil, it is such abuse of the gift of speech. To use the language of a good poet, though an often-deluded man,—

"I waive the quantum of the sin;
But, oh! it hardens all within,
And petrifies the feeling." — BURNS.

My young friends, I have tried to impress this commandment upon your minds and hearts; for, as I said, profaneness is a crying sin among us. Yet, if there should be any one that hears me who has acquired the habit, I almost should despair of doing him good by any method of reasoning or common argument; it seems to me as if he could be moved only by fear; and it seems to me as if there were something in the words of the commandment itself to indicate that fear alone can startle the mind of such an unhappy being. If so, I would hold up to him the full terrors of the law of God. I would try to bring to his ears the voice which spoke in thunders from Mount Sinai, saying, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain." I would call on him to remember the day of judgment, when that Being whom he has treated with levity and scorn will visit his sins with just displeasure. I would call upon him to remember that God cannot be deceived, and that he will not be mocked.

VII.

The *fourth* commandment is — "Remember the sabbath-day," &c.

The very words of this commandment seem to the plain common reader to show that the sabbath was instituted at the time of the creation of the world. In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth. Many other reasons could be given from Scripture to show the same thing; but it is not the design of these simple exercises to enter

into critical expositions, but to explain and enforce what may be made clear to the simple and teachable mind of youth.

It seems, then, from the words of this command, that the sabbath was instituted from the beginning of the world, or, at least, long before this command was given. It is — “*Remember the sabbath-day,*” not *appoint* a sabbath-day, “and keep it holy.”

What is the meaning of *sabbath*? It means rest, or time of rest. It is given in Walker’s Dictionary, “intermission of pain or sorrow, time of rest.” The command therefore is, Remember the day of rest, and keep it holy. What is the meaning of *holy*? Any thing is holy which is set apart from common uses, in order to be used only for those purposes which relate to God. Thus we read in the Bible of holy ground, holy house, holy vessels. These were things which had been separated to religious uses, and were not to be used for common purposes. It is in this sense of the word *holy* that it is applied to the day appointed for the sabbath. It is not the name of the day, it is the purpose of it, which is appointed to be made holy. We may therefore read the command again thus, — Remember the day of rest; separate it; and keep it sacred for religious purposes.

You see that this commandment does not name any particular day of the week; for I have told you that sabbath is not the name of the day, but the purpose of the day. It would not be improper, therefore, to say, Remember Sunday, which is appointed to be the sabbath-day; or, Remember the

seventh day of the week, which is the day of rest, and keep it holy. But, although God did not in this commandment point out the particular day, he does ordain that it shall be one day in seven, or every seventh day; that is, a seventh part of time. "Six days shalt thou labor, but the seventh is the sabbath." And God took another way to point out the particular day to the children of Israel by the miracle of the manna, which fell for their food every day in the week but one,—as your teachers will explain to you. It was necessary that a particular day should be set, so that everybody might know when it was, and all could observe it together, without which there would be great confusion. But it is easy to see, that, if God should see fit to change the day he first appointed, still it would not alter the fourth commandment. Whatever day of the seven he appointed as the sabbath, or the day of rest, that day was to be "kept holy."

Now, how wise and good it was in God to give such a command as this! In the first place, it was kind to give all his creatures a day of rest from labor. Man and beast, master and servant, were all to have one day in seven to rest themselves from the work which it was their duty to perform on all the other days. For the commandment says, "Six days shalt thou labor;" thus enjoining industry. In the second place, by commanding the time when we were to rest from work to be spent in religious duties, God has provided a method by which we have, every now and then, something to

remind us that we are more exalted than the brutes, that live and work and die in this world only. Every seven days we are put in mind of our duty as immortal beings. Even the most hardened can scarcely see a sabbath-morning rise, without having one thought come across his mind of what the day was made for; and it requires many, many years, if ever it can be done, for a person living in a land where the sabbath is at all observed, to get rid of a feeling of guilt in neglecting it.

Now, how is it that we are to keep the sabbath holy? It is by forbearing to do any thing which will make us worse, and by doing every thing which will make us better. If we spend the day in sloth and idleness, then it certainly cannot make us better, and it will make us worse; because, in doing so, we disobey God's command; and if we allow ourselves to disobey one command, whether we see any reason for it or not, we harden ourselves, and make it easy for us to be tempted to disobey any other command. If we do nothing, we cannot think that we keep the day holy. If we spend the day in any way which is only for our amusement, we make ourselves worse, for the same reasons as before, and because we fill up our minds so that we have no room for good thoughts, and no time for our religious duties. But, when we first awake on the morning of the holy sabbath, let us call to our minds that good Being who has given us the day; let us read a portion of his holy word; let us begin to think over his many, many mercies to us; let us think of our many sins against him;

and then earnestly pray to him to forgive us our sins, and thank him for his goodness to us, and beg of him to bless us and make us good and happy. Thus we shall begin the day in a holy manner, and shall be prepared to spend it in a way which will make us better.

Having begun the day well, we shall have but little difficulty in knowing how to employ its sacred hours in a useful, profitable, and happy manner. We have commenced it with the first of religious duties,—self-examination and secret prayer. I hope that many, if not most of you, are called with your beloved parents, and all your families, to join in family prayer; and how beautiful, how pleasing to God, to see a religious family assembled, especially in the calm stillness of a sabbath-morning, to unite in asking God's blessing upon them! Oh! I pity those poor children whose parents have never taught them to feel the delights of prayer,—have never accustomed them to come to God with them in the family circle, and to join, parents and children together, in praying to Him who is the heavenly Father of all who will come to him.

Now we are called by the sabbath-bells to assemble in this place of religious instruction, and to go to the house of worship; and what do we come here for? and for what do we go to church? It is to make us better. Can we be made better, can we please God, by merely going to his house week after week? Surely not. We go to join with good people in worshipping him, in praying to him and praising him. We go to hear the in-

structions of his holy word explained and enforced by his ministers; and we should remember, that, when we are in church, we are especially in the presence of God; not as I have often said, that we are any more in the presence of God at one time than another, — we are always in the sight of God, for God is everywhere, — but we go on purpose to place ourselves before God. It certainly becomes us then to be reverent and serious and attentive. Is it not awful to see a child old enough to know what is decent and proper, while those around him are attending to the worship of God or listening to his holy word, playing and laughing, or even heedless and indifferent? Would this be decent or respectful even in a common company, and will you practise it in God's house? And can you get any good either here or at church, if you conduct yourselves thus? Will you not rather grow worse, by hardening your hearts and displeasing God?

But, when you have attended to the devotions of the closet and the family, and to public worship, there are still some hours of the sabbath left. And do you ask how these may be innocently and properly spent? The same rule will apply. You may do any thing which will not make you feel less religious, less ready to love and obey God, less disposed to pray to him.

As I dread nothing so much, children, on account of the influence which I wish religion to have on you, as making it appear gloomy or melancholy; so would I do nothing to make this best of days

a dull or a tedious day to you. But surely those of you who are old enough to read, and who have the Bible and good books in your hands, never need find it dull or tedious; nor is cheerful and friendly conversation, when without levity or folly, inconsistent with the duties of the sabbath. Every thing which makes us more sensible of the goodness of God, more disposed to love him, more willing to obey him, more ready to meet him on the great judgment-day, is suitable for the sabbath. Whatever renders us less fit for these things is not suitable for it. Apply this rule in candor to your consciences, and you will never be at a loss how to keep the fourth commandment.

VIII.

The *fifth* commandment is — “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

The first four commandments are called those of the *first table*, or those which relate to our duty to God; the six others, the *second table*, or those which relate to our duty to our neighbors.

St. Paul observes that this is the first commandment, with a promise annexed to it. You remember that God gave a general promise to the Israelites, that, if they would “obey his voice indeed, and keep his covenant,” he would be their God, and they should be a peculiar people unto him; and that he would bless them in that good land which he would give them. But to this commandment

he adds a repetition of his promise. You may have noticed that almost all the promises made to the Jews, and to all those to whom God spake in the Old Testament, were of a temporal nature; that is, the rewards promised relate to this life; such as that they should have food and raiment, health and prosperity, and, like this promise, that they should live long in the land which the Lord their God gave them. But Jesus Christ, my children, has brought to us better promises than these. He tells us of another and a better world. He tells us that the consequence of obedience to God here will be to make us fit to live in that better world, and capable of enjoying its happiness. We have, indeed, to a certain extent, the same promise which the Jews had. We are told, too, that our heavenly Father careth for us; that, if we seek him and serve him, all that that is best for us here will be added unto us. But we are taught to lay up our chief treasures in heaven; that is, to value what we hope for in a future life, more than any thing we can have here.

In the commandment just read, we are told to honor our parents. To honor is, in the first place, to treat with reverence, to respect, to venerate. Now, we do not speak of reverencing and venerating those who are our equals. It is plain, therefore, that God intends that we should look to our parents as our superiors, who have a right to govern us; and we find, in all human society, that this right is acknowledged. In former ages, and I believe now in some parts of the world, I think in China, the parents have a right over even the lives of their

children. The right of parents over their children is so perfectly established, that in Scripture language, and also in the style of speaking now-a-days, kings and other rulers are spoken of as fathers; and kings and other sovereigns are addressed with the title of Sire, which, you know, is equivalent to Father. It is generally understood also, that this commandment enjoins respect, obedience, support, not only to our actual parents, but to all in authority over us, who, when lawfully possessing such authority, are entitled to our obedience, as they are appointed to administer the laws of the land, or to educate and govern us in childhood and youth.

But, although this commandment includes obedience to the laws, and to those who in any proper way "have the rule over us," yet we may content ourselves in urging it upon you in its primary and most important sense,—obedience, respect, honor, and love to parents. This will lead to all other proper obedience; for one who has been an affectionate, obedient, and submissive child will almost invariably be found in after-life the good apprentice, the faithful servant, the valuable citizen, obedient to the laws, and a promoter of good order in society.

And now, children, it seems as if it were hardly necessary to urge upon any child who is possessed of a good degree of intelligence, or right feeling, the commandment to "honour his father and his mother." It seems so much a dictate of nature. The feelings of love and respect to our parents are so implanted in our very being, that we always

speak of an ungrateful, disobedient child as a kind of monster: an unnatural child is the very term by which we describe him. And yet how many do we see, who, when they grow up, and perhaps have children of their own, will look back with sorrow and shame upon the manner in which they have requited the kindness and unwearied affection of their parents! I have often thought, if a child whom I have seen wilful, fractious, stubborn, and unkind, could only for one moment view his own conduct in the light in which he will see it, should he ever be a parent himself, or in which he will see it when God has taken away these kind guardians of his youth, how ashamed he would be of his conduct; how immediately he would reform, and become all a parent could wish.

But you can do this now, children, in a good measure, if you will but allow yourselves to think. It is thoughtlessness in this, as in a thousand other things, which makes us forget and neglect our duty. Stop now a moment, my children; let your thoughts go with me; listen to me, and think what I am saying, and fix it in your minds; and when tempted to yield to your wilful, discontented humors, — when tempted to do any thing which you know will give your parents pain, — call to mind how much you owe to these very parents whom you are treating with so much neglect and disrespect.

What do you not owe to them? Look at that helpless little infant, such as many of you daily see in your own houses; see it in all its weakness.

What would become of it, if its parents were to leave it but a single day by itself, — if they were to cease but a single hour their unwearied attentions to it? Hear its feeble cry; see it by day and by night in its kind parents' arms; their time by day, and their rest by night, broken in upon and disturbed by attention to its constant wants. Behold it sick and in pain, — who watch over it day after day, and night after night; with their own frames, perhaps, borne down by illness, forgetting themselves, and thinking only of this helpless little one? See it now beginning to come forward farther in life: who teaches its little feet to walk, — its infant tongue to lisp its first words? What, think you, would become of a child, even if it had food given it to support its strength, if left without these first lessons of life? You would see it, like the brute, crawling on all fours, and dumb as the wretched animals about it. Such infants have each of you been. Such care and toil have each of you cost.

Trace now your whole course in life, step by step, to whatever age you now bear. What have you been but an object of constant care and tender solicitude to your parents? For what have they toiled and labored, but to supply you with food and raiment and education? While you have been spending your hours in amusements, or in freedom from care, or in quiet and peaceful slumbers, who have waked and thought and labored that you might be at ease and in safety; and, while you perhaps have murmured and complained that you were called upon to lose an hour's childish enjoy-

ment to assist them, or that you have been obliged to study to improve your minds, and prepare yourselves for the time when God shall take these parents from you, who have endured anxiety and solicitude that you might be happy?

Children, have you religious parents? Have you heard your parents pray in private and in the family? and for whom have you heard the most fervent prayers arise to heaven from your parents' lips? Was it for themselves, or for your goodness and happiness? Have any of you stood by the dying bed of a father or a mother? What did you find caused the bitterest pang in that trying hour? Was it not the thought of leaving the children of their love? Was it not that they should no more be able to minister to your wants, and guide you in the paths of happiness and heaven? Think of these things, children; and then tell me, should you not love and honor your father and mother?

Look back, those of you who are most advanced in years, and see if you do not remember many and many times when you have been unwilling to do things which your parents desired, and which you can now see it was proper and necessary that you should do; which if you had not done, you would now perhaps be suffering the consequences. In these things, you will acknowledge that they were wiser than you. And may they not still be wiser in other things? Have you now grown too wise to make any mistakes? Do you yet know as much as those whose years have given them wisdom and experience? Is it certain that sixteen

or seventeen years is enough to learn all wisdom? If they were superior to you in infancy, so are they proportionably now; if you acknowledge that obedience was useful to you then, so will you in future years judge of the present time.

But I need detain you no longer. The duty enforced in this commandment is one of so much importance, that it is doubtless often the theme of your teachers' conversation. You have many books, too, which set this subject before you in the strongest light. And, above all, you have the Bible; and in that holy book you will find passage upon passage, besides the law given upon Mount Sinai. You will there find,—“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right;” “Cursed is he that setteth light by his father or mother;” “The eye that mocketh at his father, . . . the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” You will there see the example of Solomon, the wise king, who descended from his throne when his mother appeared; you will read of Samuel, of Timothy, and many others; you will read of the blessed Jesus, “the Lord of glory,” who, when he was on earth, was subject to his parents, and almost whose last words upon the cross were to commend his mother to the care of his beloved disciple. Surely, children, these commands, these threatenings, these examples, cannot be lost upon you.

My friends, we are all children of our heavenly Father; and, while we mark the waywardness and folly of our own children in disobeying us to their

hurt, let them teach us a lesson that our happiness depends upon our obedience to a greater Parent. Do we wonder that they see not that our wisdom is greater than theirs? — let us wonder more at the folly and arrogance of our own conduct in saying to God by our practice, “We are wiser than thou! Our will, not thine, be done!”

IX.

The *sixth* commandment is — “Thou shalt not kill.”

And now I suppose some of you are thinking that there is no great need of spending much time in explaining or enforcing this commandment. “We all,” perhaps you are thinking, “we all know that it is horridly wicked to commit murder; and we surely are in no danger of ever being tempted to commit this dreadful crime.” Just so, my dear children, just so once thought probably every person who ever committed this crime. We are told in the Old Testament of a person who, when a prophet of God told him that he would come to commit this and other awful sins, exclaimed in indignation, “Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?” and yet his bad passions led him in a very short time to commit the very sins which he thought it impossible for him even to think of. Although I cannot believe that any child who has such advantages as you children all enjoy should ever become so horribly depraved as to be guilty of the sin forbidden in this command-

ment in its literal and worst sense, yet we must not forget that the purpose for which you come here, for which you listen to the instructions of the house of God, and for which all your means of grace are given, is to guard you against the first approaches of evil; to protect you against the beginnings of temptation, which, if indulged, may lead you on from step to step until you are involved in utter ruin of body and soul.

Refer, then, to the comment of our Saviour upon this commandment. He tells us that whosoever is, without a cause, angry with his brother, — which, I take it, here means his brother-man or his fellow-creature, — whosoever indulges in reviling words, whosoever allows his passions to get the better of him in small things, is in danger most imminent. Many of you will remember the verse in Dr. Watts's hymn, —

“Hard names at first and threatening words,
Which are but noisy breath,
May grow to clubs and naked swords,
To murder and to death.”

And what saith the apostle John? — “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.” We see, then, that, in the view of God, who looks upon the heart and knows all the bad passions which are cherished and indulged, and who knows to what they would lead if unrestrained by fear of human laws or other causes, — I say, that, in the view of God, some may appear murderers who have never shed the blood of their fellow-beings.

It is anger and hatred, then, that is the root from

which springs, in all cases, the dreadful crime of murder. Passion, malice, revenge, all lead to murder when left to their full sway; and he who indulges in these, ventures more than he who walks upon the slippery ice: he knows not for a moment that his footing is secure. When we consider the danger of indulging angry passions, we cannot wonder at the precept upon precept which is given in the New Testament, that we should love one another, be peaceable, humble, gentle, kindly-affectioned one towards another in brotherly love, forgiving one another, not letting the sun go down upon our wrath. I do not say that every one who gets into a passion would, when cool, deliberately murder the person with whom he is in a passion; but I do say, that, if we do not early learn to check and govern our angry passions, they will most assuredly govern us. How many, in a fit of passion, have done things which have made them miserable for ever after! Have you never seen a child strike? Have you never yourself, when angry, struck a blow, which, if your body had been as strong as your passion, would have killed the person you struck? Have you never seen a child — yes, a puny child — exert all his strength to throw a stone, which, if it had struck as it was aimed, would have killed his companion? Have you never known or heard of such a thing as one boy's killing another in such a way? But perhaps you will say, "This is not murder; he did not mean to kill him." What did he mean to do? He knew not himself: he only wanted to vent his rage, to punish him who

he thought had injured him ; and what does the deliberate murderer do more ? I know there is a difference both in reality and in the eye of the law ; but, children, if, contrary to the command of God, we indulge our passions, do not try to regulate and control them, and if these passions lead us at last to the crime of killing another, though not expressly intended at the time, is it not murder in the sight of God ? If a man knows that by getting drunk he loses his senses, and may commit crimes at which he would shudder when sober, and yet continues voluntarily to get intoxicated, I ask you seriously if he ought not in justice to be held responsible for the crimes he commits when intoxicated. So, I repeat, if you indulge in anger, revenge, or hatred, you may even be a murderer in the sight of God, who knows to what your passions might lead you if unrestrained by the fear of punishment, or by his preventing grace.

Cruelty, also, which is ever a companion of rage and passion, is forbidden in this commandment. You cannot too much abhor and avoid the first beginnings of this hateful feeling. I never see a child — a child, whose heart we should expect to be so tender and affectionate and kind — delighting in hurting or tormenting even a fly or a bird, or any creature, but I think that child may be preparing himself for a course of savage wickedness, at which the soul recoils.

Could you learn the history of some of those monsters in human shape, who performed such acts of cruelty a few years ago, — I mean the

pirates,—I believe you would find, in nine instances out of ten, that, in their childhood and youth, they were such as delighted in tormenting harmless creatures,—in tearing the wings from flies, or the stings from bees; in robbing birds' nests; in torturing dogs and cats, and the like. And is it not as strange and unnatural, is it not as much to be wondered at, to see a young person take delight in torturing and tormenting a miserable brute or a harmless bird, as it is to see the pirate, hardened by years of cruelty and crime, butchering his fellow-men in cold blood? One is but the child of hell; the other, the full-grown servant of him who was a murderer from the beginning. Avoid, then, my children, all cruelty. Tread not needlessly upon the little ant which crawls at your feet. Remember that the smallest of God's creatures have feeling like yourselves: all were made by the same God, and made for happiness. Remember that you cannot restore the life you take away. Neither you, nor the greatest man that ever lived, can impart motion to the wing of the smallest butterfly. Life is, above all else, God's peculiar gift; and, although he gives man power and permission to take away the lives of the inferior animals, when necessary for his own comfort or support, he will not hold him guiltless who wantonly destroys life in any of his creatures, or needlessly disturbs their happiness or enjoyment.

X.

Upon the *seventh* commandment it will not be necessary here to remark. When you know its meaning, you have only to refer again to our Saviour's remarks upon it in the Sermon on the Mount, and you will need no further comment to show the purity and extent of this as well as of all the other commandments.

The *eighth* commandment is — "Thou shalt not steal."

While I was thinking, that, when I came in course to this commandment, I should have but little to say in our school to convince our children of the wickedness of stealing, or to guard them against it, an event has occurred which most painfully reminds us, that we can think of no crime, however great, which even a child may not come to commit, if he yields in the beginning to his evil passions, and neglects the early lessons given him of obedience to God and his commandments. Children, within a few days, — on that day of rejoicing which is, alas! the time of so much danger to every one who is in any degree disposed to evil, — on the 4th of July, a boy of this school was detected in — what do you think? in stealing an orange, or a cake, or a trifling plaything? No, but detected in breaking into a shop and stealing money. Yes, a boy was detected in shopbreaking, and in robbing the owner of money; a boy of this Sunday-school was detected in a crime which exposes him to be cast out of society, and shut up for years in the

state-prison among the most abandoned and hardened wretches who are the pest of society. And what kind of a boy do you suppose it was? Probably you will think it was a poor, ignorant being, who had lived for years, and almost grown up, among abandoned and wicked persons, amid examples of all sorts of vice, and who had never been in a Sunday-school or in any place of religious instruction, until he had become too old to be much impressed by any lessons he might receive, and too stupid and hard-hearted to be instructed with any effect. No, it was no such child as this. It was a boy who is young in years, is as intelligent, has as good natural powers, as good sense, as perhaps any scholar in our school. It is a boy who, although he has lost both his parents, has been tenderly educated, has had those who have kindly taken care of him, has been ever regular in his attendance at the house of God, has been I do not know but the most punctual scholar we have had at school; who has ever been reported as having the best lessons, and as appearing to understand them well. And this is the boy, with all these advantages, with all this care, with all these means of knowing his duty, who has now been convicted of the crime of stealing. And this is now found not to be the first, nor the second, nor the third time: he has, we fear, become a confirmed thief. My beloved children, what do you think must be the feelings of your teachers on seeing such a total failure of all their efforts? what do you think must be our sensations on finding such a return for our labor

and anxiety and exertion to do you good here? But, blessed be God, we do not believe that such is often the case. We do believe that many, many of you have received, and will receive, our teachings with better effect. But what must be our feelings, what also must be the feelings of the friends of this boy, with regard to him? To see such a child, in the early morning of his days, so far advanced in the school of wickedness, plunging on at so terrible a speed in the road to destruction; to behold, as it were, but at a short distance more, the very gallows waiting for him! What must be our and their feelings? We are ready to exclaim, God only can save this child; we have done all; we must give him up. But, ah! is it too late—is it too late for ever to save him from a disgraceful death here, and the death of the soul hereafter? It may not be: let us yet pray for him; let us not wholly abandon him; God may yet give him time to live and to repent. May God of his mercy stop him in his career!

We have not mentioned this boy's name. We hope it is unknown to most of you. We feel the greatest sorrow for his kind friends, and we will give them our prayers that their efforts may yet be blessed to the salvation of the child.

And now, children, shall I attempt to enforce upon you the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal"? I cannot command my feelings and thoughts to do it now: let me hope that your own reflections upon this melancholy event will be of more effect than any thing I could say.

XI.

After the painful event which led to my last remarks upon the *eighth* commandment, it is extremely unpleasant again to recur to it. But, from the occurrence of that event, I consider it even more necessary to dwell upon the subject. It shows in a strong manner the necessity of guarding you all, by repeated exhortations, against the first growth of a fault which may lead you on, even in your early youth, to crimes which will ruin your character here, and endanger your souls hereafter. It is only by warning you again and again, by setting sin and its dangers in every light, and showing you that the way of transgressors is indeed hard and leadeth unto death, that we can hope to save you from walking in that way. And, after all, unless God bless our labors, and unless you open your hearts to his holy influences, all will be, as water spilt upon the ground, wasted and lost. There is no charm, children, in coming to the Sunday-school. The best school, the best teachers in the world, can do you no good if you will not try to be good yourselves. I know, and I grieve to know, that there are as bad children in Sunday-schools as there are out of them; but I trust that there are comparatively few; and they are blots upon the reputation of our schools. But it should never be for a moment concealed, that a child, or any one else, may come to the Sunday-school, may attend church, may comply with all the outward forms of religion, and yet have such a bad and hypocritical heart as

to be liable to fall into the first temptation to almost any crime. I have known, since I have been in this school, at least four instances of children who belonged to it, who have, while they were members of it or afterwards, been detected in the very crime forbidden in this commandment; and yet I have heard persons intimate that they have never known one who had been in a Sunday-school to have been publicly convicted of any crime. Such representations injure the cause. I repeat it, there is no charm, no supernatural influence, in Sunday-schools. I have no doubt of their great benefit; and I hope that they have had an effect, and will have a still greater, to lessen crime and to improve society: but we must not exaggerate any thing.

But, my children, it is not of the full-grown crime of theft and robbery that I would now particularly speak to you. You have heard me tell the story of the wicked young man in England, who was sentenced to be hung for highway robbery, — that is, for stopping a person on the public road and robbing him, which in England is punished with death, — who, when he came to the gallows, requested to speak with his mother. When she came to him, he pretended to whisper to her, and, while doing so, suddenly snapped at her ear and bit it off. When those around reproached him for this dreadful act to his own mother, and just as he was going out of the world too, he exclaimed, “I have not been half so cruel to her as she has been to me; for if she had punished me as she ought to have done when I stole that little spelling-book at school, which was

my first crime, I should never have come to this shameful end."

So it is, children, our greatest care should be to guard against the beginning of sin, — against little sins, as they are called. Oh! what are little sins? Who shall say that this or that thing which the great God has forbidden is a little sin? Does the eighth commandment say, "Thou shalt not steal more than a mere trifle"? The eighth commandment says, "Thou shalt not steal." And who shall limit its meaning?

But it is not in actually stealing alone that this crime always begins or consists. Its true meaning goes further back than this. It is by violating the spirit of the commandment that sinners grow hardened to go on to the literal crime. It is by little tricks of cheating, of deceiving, of over-reaching, that we see the spirit manifested, which, if it were not for fear of human laws, of exposure and punishment, would soon show itself in theft and robbery; and he who wrongs another in any way violates the spirit of the command, and knows not where he may stop.

Remember, then, children, remember now in your childhood and youth, as you grow up, and through life, that, even with respect to this life, honesty is the best policy; that, in all your actions, the eye of God is ever upon you; and that he will punish your crimes, whether they are ever known to man or not. He almost always does punish them in this world: if not, he will most assuredly punish them in the next.

Have any of you, my young friends, ever indulged in the wicked act of taking what did not belong to you,—even the smallest thing? Especially have any of you ever been guilty of that crime which boys are apt to think of so little importance,—I mean the stealing of fruit, the robbing of gardens and orchards? Let me beg of you to stop, and think of the course you are entering upon. I have said once and again that it is not the value of the thing you steal which makes the crime of theft. Is an apple or a peach any more yours because it grows in a person's garden, than a dollar or five hundred dollars locked up in his house or his desk? Is an apple or a pear which a farmer brings to market in a cart to sell any more yours than a piece of goods which lies in my store? and have you any more right to take it without his leave? And yet I have seen a boy taking apples from a market-cart, who would have shuddered then at the thought of taking money or goods from his master's store, if he was an apprentice; and yet I would never have such a boy come into my store as an apprentice, or even for a moment, without watching him. Do not deceive yourselves thus, my children. You cannot deceive God. If you have sinned, repent, and beg of God to forgive you, and resolve to sin no more. Depend upon it, the way of all sin is hard and dangerous; and especially the ways of dishonesty lead to all sin and all misery. A guilty conscience is an eternal source of wretchedness. "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth." Be just, be honest, and fear not.

XII.

The *ninth* commandment is — “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

Perhaps the most direct purpose of this commandment is to forbid the giving of false testimony in courts of justice. You know that at such times evidence is given by the witnesses upon oath. That is, they call upon God as their witness that they speak “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” The witness says, that, as he speaks the truth, so help him God. There is a most awful solemnity in this act; and as you probably, should you live to grow up, will have occasion to perform it, it is proper that you should understand its meaning. Our Saviour told his disciples to let their “yea be yea, and their nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” And this is most true; for you see at once that if all men always spoke the truth, if there were no such “evil” as lying in the world, there could be no need, under any circumstances, of guarding the truth by the solemnity of an oath. And when the full power of Christianity shall prevail in the world; when men shall all be the real disciples of Christ, they will fully obey all his precepts. Their *yes* will then always mean *yes*, and their *no* always mean *no*; that is, they will always speak the truth, and these oaths, which come of the evil of men’s sometimes telling falsehoods, will be done away.

But in the present state of society, when the

bad are so mixed with the good, and the wicked so often wear the hypocritical appearance of the just, it is needful for men, who cannot, as God can, look upon the heart, to place something in the way which will make the wicked pause and think before they assert a falsehood. And for this purpose it is that oaths are permitted and required in courts of justice, and in some other cases where it is of particular importance that the truth should be told. For there are many persons who think there is a wide difference between telling a falsehood when they are under an oath, and when they are not; many that would tremble to take a false oath, who would think it of very little consequence to tell what they would call a common lie. And it is true that there is a difference; but what is the difference? God has told us by his servants, in the Bible, "Speak every man the truth to his neighbor;" and in another place, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor." These and many other texts command us to speak the truth always, and forbid us to utter a lie under any circumstances: why, then, is it worse to tell a lie when we are under oath, than when we are not? God has forbidden all lies. The difference is this: when we take an oath, we deliberately call upon God to be a witness of the truth of what we say; and, if we speak what is false, we deliberately insult the most high God; and we pray to him to deal with us, according as we speak the truth or falsehood; for this I conceive to be the meaning of the words

of the oath, "So help me God." And also, when we are called upon to take a solemn oath, we are reminded, and have time to think, that the eye of God is upon us, and that he has assured us that "all liars" shall be most severely punished. But now, children, if we could only impress upon our minds a just and realizing sense of the great truths which you have heard us so often speak about, and which it is our first endeavor to teach you in this school; if we could only make ourselves ever remember and feel that God always sees us, and knows our thoughts as well as our words, and if we really loved him and wished to please him, how much need would there ever be of an oath to make us tell the truth? Oh! if we could always have a realizing sense of the omnipresence of God, and if we only knew how much happier we should be in keeping all his commands, what an incentive it would be to duty, and what a guard against sin of every kind!

It is true, then, children, that the first bearing of this command is against giving false testimony in courts of justice. But, in all our observations upon the commandments, we have endeavored, as our Lord has taught us, to show you the full spirit of the law; — to show you, as he did, that it is not the mere letter, the exact words only, that we must obey; but that we must study to see the whole meaning, and to fulfil it as he did. In this commandment, then, every species of falsehood is forbidden. And have you ever thought, children, that, every time you tell a lie, you break one of the Ten

Commandments? It is even so. You break the ninth commandment every time you tell a falsehood of any kind, as much as you break the eighth every time you steal; and you know we told you it was stealing, let the thing taken be ever so trifling. In neither case are we allowed to say, "It is but" so and so. We may not alter or limit God's words to suit ourselves. Besides, it is not the only way of breaking the very words of this commandment to bear false witness under oath. If we relate any thing as true about another person which we know to be false, we certainly "bear false witness against our neighbor." And all kinds of slander and evil speaking, and all misrepresentations, all suppression of the truth, — that is, keeping back the truth, or a part of it, to the injury of another, — are, in fact, bearing false witness. It is saying or trying to make something appear against our neighbor which is not true, and which is designed to injure him. All this is literally to break the ninth commandment.

I repeat it: I consider this commandment, in its spirit, as forbidding all kinds of falsehood, in whatever form. Some of you may remember what has been said on other occasions: you may remember the remarks made upon the story of Ananias and Sapphira; you remember especially, I trust, the texts which tell us that every one who speaketh lies is of the devil, who is the father of lies, and was a liar from the beginning; you remember that we are told, where the apostle John is describing heaven, that "there shall in no wise enter into it

any thing which defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or *maketh a lie.*"

Would you pass in this world, even among men, with an honorable and respected character, avoid every species of falsehood and deception. Do not think that you tell a lie only when you say it in plain words. There are many ways of deceiving, besides words. A shake of the head, a sign, a look, which is designed to deceive, is as much a lie as plain words of falsehood. Think often of this: if we wish to do wrong, we may find ways enough to deceive ourselves.

But let it be your endeavor to have such a fair and honorable character that those around you may always be willing to believe your simple word. It is related of one of the ancient Romans, that his countrymen passed a law that he should never be required to take an oath in their courts, because he always spoke the truth. What an honor was this!

How is it, children, that the habit of falsehood begins? Generally, it is by trying to hide some fault which we have committed, or to obtain some good which we wish for. But, if I had time, I think I could show you how mistaken are those who hope to avoid any evil, or get any good, by lying. I wish I could also say more to you upon the disgraceful, the hateful nature of this sin. I wish I could show you a picture of the character of a fair, honest, open-hearted boy, who scorns a lie, and who is believed at his first word; and then contrast it with that of the low, despicable, suspected, despised liar; the one beloved and respected, the

other ever avoided and hated. I wish I could show you the consciences of these two, and let you see which of them has true peace within. But your teachers will do all this; they have no doubt done it often; and all that I have said, and all that you hear from this desk, Sunday after Sunday, is nothing new to many of you. I am well aware of this, my young friends. But shall I repeat again something else that is not new? It is by line upon line, by precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, that God is teaching us in his providence and in his word; and thus would we teach you, so that by any means some truth at some time may reach some heart, and that by any means we may have the joy to "save some."

XIII.

The *tenth* commandment is—"Thou shalt not covet," &c.

In explaining the other commandments, I have had occasion to show you, that, although most of them spoke of actions only, they were in their spirit applicable to the thoughts and feelings of the heart also. Thus, if we were commanded not to take the name of God in vain, it was intended, not only that we should not use the name of God in any light and irreverent manner, but that we should use no kind of language which came near to such profanity; that we should always think and speak and feel with reverence about God, and all that is holy, so as to have no desire to treat sacred

things lightly. If we were commanded to do no murder, it was prescribed by that commandment that we should not indulge angry and passionate feelings; that we should avoid all hatred and malice and ill-will towards any of our fellow-beings; and that we should abhor all kinds of cruelty, all of which might prepare us for and lead us on even to murder.

But here is a commandment which comes at once to the very thoughts and desires themselves. It comes at once to the root of all our actions.

To covet is to feel an improper desire for something which we have not. It is to feel such a desire as will put us in danger of doing something improper, something wrong, to obtain the desired object. Thus, if we desire or covet our neighbor's property, we are in danger of being tempted to steal. We may not feel this temptation at first, and we may think there is no great harm in wishing we had something which does not belong to us. But see the danger. We begin by wishing for it. We indulge ourselves in thinking of it, until, by and by, the thought comes up, Why should not I have it as well as another? and the temptation creeps in for us to try some way to obtain it; and, before we are aware, perhaps, of the awful gulf before us, we are guilty of dishonesty. Now, if we had obeyed the tenth commandment,—if, when we first felt the risings of this improper desire, we had suppressed it, driven it away,—we should never have had the temptation. Thus you see the use and meaning of what our Saviour said so much about, and

what this commandment is intended to effect ; that is, the regulation of the heart and thoughts. "For out of the heart," says our divine teacher, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, thefts, covetousness, deceit, lasciviousness, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."

This commandment also forbids us to indulge any excessive desire for what we have not, whether we wish to obtain it by taking it away from another or not. The apostle says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have." Covetousness, we are told, is idolatry. All such desires after any thing which we do not possess, as render us discontented and produce a murmuring, complaining spirit, are forbidden by God. And in this we may see a striking instance of the important truth, that all God's laws are designed to promote our happiness, and that the very keeping of these laws brings the reward along with it: as the Psalmist says, "In keeping thy commandments there is great reward." For what is there in the world which causes so much unhappiness as a discontented, dissatisfied spirit? and who is there that we see so peaceful and happy as the contented man?

There is a kind of desire after things which we have not, apart from covetousness and discontent, which is a very proper feeling. For instance, a man who is poor should desire, and labor to obtain, sufficient property to support and educate his family, and to keep him and them from being burdensome to others. This desire should lead him to be industrious and frugal. But if he is indus-

trious and frugal, and still God sees fit to keep him in poverty, he will, if he is a good man, be contented with his lot. Believing that God knows what is best for him, he will not murmur or complain. His desire after things which he has not is not excessive or improper; it is perfectly consistent with God's will, which is that we should be "not slothful in business," but that we should work with our hands, endeavoring to "provide things honest in the sight of all men."

The natural and constant accompaniment of covetousness is envy, the most wretched and hateful of human passions;—a feeling which makes a man unhappy to see another happy; which makes him wretched, although surrounded with blessings, if he sees any one else enjoying greater, or even the same blessings; which makes him feel as if every one were his enemy who has more enjoyment than he has, and wish to deprive his neighbor of his possessions, although he could not be in the least benefited by them himself; which causes him to rejoice to see another made miserable. Well might the wise man exclaim, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?"

It is implied, then, in the tenth commandment, that we be content with the situation in which God has placed us; that, while we employ the means he has given us of improving our condition, we never murmur or complain, even if we fail of success; that we do not envy others who are more successful in life, or whom Providence has placed

above us or before us, either in talents, property, health, or domestic comforts; and, above all, that we do not allow ourselves to covet what belongs to another, — to feel for one moment any such desire as would endanger our virtue, or lead us into worse temptations.

Thus, my children, I have gone over the Ten Commandments. As I told you when I set out, I have left much unsaid which might have been said; for it is the glory of the Sacred Scriptures, that the more we contemplate them, the more rich and comprehensive they appear. What occupies but a little verse or a line in the Bible may often furnish matter for hours and days of contemplation and instruction. But to have the full benefit of this, we must read and think for ourselves: another can never convey the instructions of the Scriptures to your minds, as they will be conveyed by your own serious and prayerful study. I say *prayerful*: do you understand my meaning? I would say, that, to read the Bible with profit, it must be done with a state of mind full of prayer. You should take up the Bible when you go to study it, thinking that it is God's book; that it contains instructions coming directly from him. You should pray to him to help you to understand it. You should read it with care, often stopping to reflect, and to inquire if you do understand what you read; and, if you are not sure that you do, you should seek for help; and you should ever keep your mind awake and attentive. This is a serious and prayerful state of mind, — a state in which, if I may so

speak, there is always a prayer lying ready in your heart to be offered up to God at any moment. And depend upon it, children, the eye of God sees it there, even before it is uttered; and he will ever have his ear open to receive it. My children, if you do now, or ever should, know what true religion is, you will know that a prayerful disposition is the only disposition for real peace and happiness. It is a phrase often misused, and often used without meaning; but it is full of meaning.

As I told you also in the beginning, there are many things which might be explained and enforced, as contained in the commandments, which you will better understand when you are older. I have always aimed to speak only of such things as you all might comprehend. And so it is in all our lessons from the Bible. This sacred volume contains instruction for every age and every capacity. It is so plain that the simplest need not err therein, so far as is necessary for his salvation; yet it has such riches of wisdom, that the wisest and the most learned can never exhaust it.

There is one thing which, I think, must have struck you in our reflections upon this sacred summary of the will of God; and that is the entire consistency and agreement between the law given by Moses and the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments contain a kind of epitome, a summing up of all the doctrines of the Old Testament; that is, of those doctrines and laws which relate not to the Jews only, but to all the world. Many of the laws given by Moses related to the

Jews only as a nation, as I explained to you at first; but these are easily distinguished from what is called the moral law, which was intended to be binding upon all men. The agreement of this law with the instructions of our blessed Saviour — the Lawgiver of Christians — we have seen at every step of our progress; and it must, if our remarks have been at all successful, have proved to you that Jesus came indeed, “not to destroy the law, but to fulfil;” that is, to complete it, to carry it out in the spirit as well as the letter; — and thus to show that all that God ever says and does is consistent in all its parts. God never contradicts himself. “With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Jesus, indeed, revealed much more, and taught a more spiritual religion, than Moses; but there is no contradiction in the two revelations.

These exercises have now been extended through the first course of lessons which we give you in school. We have remarked upon all those lessons which are contained in the little pamphlet which is given to each scholar when he enters school, and which, by our regulations, is required to be thoroughly committed to memory, and as well understood as possible, before any other book is used.

What arrangement may be made for continuing this method of instruction, or whether it will be continued, I cannot now say. We can only unite in prayer to God to bless all our efforts, and all our means of instruction, to the advancement of his grace in your hearts.

DO THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN CONTINUE
AFTER REPENTANCE! *

THE real subject of inquiry, when this question is often anxiously asked, may probably be thus stated: "Is it in the power and is it the will of our heavenly Father to restore the truly penitent to a full standing in his divine love, and to as full a participation in the joys of heaven as if he had never sinned?" It is doubt upon one or both of these points that often gives to the humble penitent the most acute anxiety and solicitude; and probably, strange as it may seem, it is more frequently a doubt of the power than of the love of God that harasses the sorrowing mind. Almighty power itself, it is said, cannot restore lost time; infinite wisdom cannot have made laws which can ever require to be abrogated. And this fallacy — for such it is — is sometimes suffered to conjure up phantoms of terror as dreadful as ever haunt the mind of the deluded believer in inexorable fate. The deductions of logic are made to triumph over revelation and the word of God itself. They are sometimes dwelt upon with a pride of reasoning that seems to think the argument too good to be lost, though it may cause thousands of souls years of anguish. The surgeon-like — I had almost said

* This and the following Essays were read at meetings of the Sunday-school teachers.

butcher-like — train of thought which defaces some parts of Abbott's "Corner-stone," is a revolting specimen of this. It represents the Father of mercies as bound in fetters of his own forging, unmoved by the keenest misery of his children, inflicting with his own hand, and with "inflexible firmness," the penalties of sin; for "fixed laws must have their course."

But take the most vaunted of these unanswerable arguments for the eternity of the penalties of repented sin, — the assertion that time lost cannot be recovered; and does it follow that the same height cannot be attained, or the same advance made by accelerated speed, that might have been obtained by an uninterrupted though slower progress? And, were it not so, the penitent is not necessarily placed in any worse condition than those whose birth occurred as much later than his, as he is behind his due place on the score of sinful neglect. And it is a mere assumption to say, that he or they will not, at a given point, be found upon a level with others; supposing, which is by no means admitted, that such equality is essential to the highest happiness of all. And the other assertion, that divine wisdom cannot have made laws which may require to be abrogated, may be (and it must be) admitted to be true, and yet not lessen one iota the hope of the trembling penitent. For who is the presumptuous one who undertakes to define the laws of God? Who will dare to say that He who made the law, that suffering and loss shall follow sin, cannot and has not made a law, that, upon penitence, such suf-

fering shall be wholly stayed, and such loss wholly made up ?

But the experience of the humbled and repentant sinner, it may seem, fills him with doubt and fear. He finds that the chains of sin are not broken from his limbs; the polluted fancy still fills its chambers of imagery with phantoms of guilt; the gnawings of appetite still harass him; he cowers and shrinks before the pictures of memory, which no tears have yet been able to wash away. So, too, will he find, if he has ruined his constitution by sinful indulgences, or has wasted his estate by riotous living, that sickness and infirmity and poverty will still attend him, however truly he may mourn; and however completely he may have forsaken the sins which brought these evils upon him. Then let him ask himself, had his God, in a voice from heaven, announced to him, "Thy sins are pardoned; yet, for wise purposes, which thou shalt hereafter understand, thou art required to perform a certain penance, to bear a certain burden of sorrow, to surrender a certain cherished blessing," — would he not have submitted with unrepining humility, nay, with joyful gratitude? Let him believe, then, that these gallings of the chains which he formerly hugged, — these now-revolting phantoms which he once courted and cherished, — these pangs of memory which keep him bowed to the earth, are but the means which his wise and merciful Physician will overrule for his full and final cure. And let him trust in faith, if all sin be indeed hateful to him, that the decree has gone forth, "Thy sins are

forgiven thee ;” and that in due time he will hear the blessed words, “ Go in peace.”

But it is not in argument alone or chiefly, thanks be to God, that the awakened penitent is left to seek his hope. Let him desert the skilful casuist, and the cool reasoner upon God’s decrees, and open the New Testament. Let him listen to the voice of the Son of God, saying, “ Be not afraid : only believe.” Let him read the blessed parable of the returned prodigal ; and as he hears the Father’s voice exclaiming, “ This my son was dead, and is alive again,” let him not heed the churlish murmurs of the elder brother, “ He hath wasted his living with sinners.” Let him contemplate the miracles of love, by which he who was the “ fulness of the God-head ” showed forth the nature as well as the proof of his mission ; and as he sees “ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the leper cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead raised up,” let him not be faithless, but believing ; let him not fear that such power can only partially minister to the soul diseased. Let him look at the poor sufferer laid at the Master’s feet ; and, though the soul-cheering words of pardon bring not at once strength to the palsied limbs, let him not doubt whether it be easier to say, “ Thy sins be forgiven thee,” or to say, “ Rise up, and walk.”

But let not this subject be dismissed without a warning thought to each of our hearts, that we be not self-deceived as to the dreadful reality of the consequences of sin, or the nature of true repentance. The familiarity with which we hear sudden

conversion and death-bed repentance spoken of, too plainly shows how much this important word is misunderstood. I have not time to enlarge upon this point; but let the warning suffice, that we mistake not fear for sorrow, penance for penitence; that we remember, that repentance, if genuine, includes a change of character perfect and entire. For as sin and ruin are connected by an indissoluble chain, so happiness and peace hold companionship only with purity and holiness.

These remarks are submitted in the trust, that, if less argumentative than some which we trust will be made, they are founded on revealed truth, and may commend themselves as more congenial and consolatory to the anxious mind than a more elaborate discussion of the subject.

“IT WAS THE PREPARATION-DAY.”

How often does the abuse of a good thing lead to its disuse! Perhaps the very connection in which the above words stand may be turned into an argument against what I wish to recommend. The wretched murderers of our blessed Lord feared to allow his body to remain on the cross, because “it was the preparation-day” for the sabbath; and “that sabbath was a high day.” Our New England fathers remembered Saturday evening, to keep it holy; and we, not so reading the commandment, and fearing to become superstitious, refuse to give

any portion of that brief space to "preparation" for the sabbath.

We ought, however, to consider every question on its own merits, and chiefly with regard to its bearing upon our own characters; and, thus considering it, I, for one, have always found some degree of separation of the evening of Saturday a most useful practice. However seriously disposed, it is almost impossible to turn away the mind suddenly from the common avocations of life, and to enter with proper attention upon religious services or duties; and, even after a night's sleep, the last employment of the evening will usually pervade the early morning thoughts. An interesting book upon any ordinary topic, and especially an exciting narrative or fiction, which has been allowed to occupy the closing hour of Saturday evening, will hardly fail to claim the first wakeful hours of the sabbath morning.

It is, however, an important part of the duties of the "preparation-day" to bring the labors of the week to some close, or to a convenient stopping-place. All who intend to keep the sabbath itself contrive to bring their employments to a finishing point at some hour of Saturday evening. With most persons, this hour could, with more ease than those who have not tried the experiment would believe, be fixed earlier than it now is. And the influence of a quiet hour or two, spent in serious reading and thought on Saturday evening, can hardly be appreciated in its power to give a peaceful rest, and a happy awakening to the coming sabbath.

Public opinion respecting Saturday evening has greatly altered of late years. Formerly, no public amusement, no general visiting, was deemed allowable or respectable on that evening. Now no distinction whatever seems to be made in many places. But, as serious Christians, we must not allow our private feelings or practice to be influenced by public opinion or practice. We may and should act as we like for ourselves, and as will most tend to our own edification, without undertaking to dictate, or to censure others.

To Sunday-school teachers, how important is the use of Saturday evening! How can they do without it? Can they justify themselves in the neglect of its advantages, if it is possible to obtain them? And to whom of our number are they wholly unattainable? Have any — even teachers of the youngest classes — such simple lessons to give, that they require no previous preparation, no auxiliary reading, no quiet season of prayerful thought? And, be they ever so diligent on the holy day itself, they will find, if they will but try it, that a preparation-eve is a most happy and profitable season.

IS THE FEELING OF GRATITUDE INNATE?

WHEN the feeble wail of the infant brings the watchful mother to its side, and the wants of the little helpless one are relieved; when the bright, laughing eye, glistening through recent tears, is

turned to the mother's face, and the tiny hand is pressed upon her heart,—what is the meaning of its expression? I should answer, Gratitude. Let the help be withdrawn, or administered unkindly, and we shall see feelings, which no one denies to be innate, exhibited in the resentful cry and the puny struggle.

When the first great command is promulgated, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," — "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," — upon what is the requirement based? "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;" "The Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering and abundant in goodness." The appeal seems to me to be plainly made to an innate feeling of gratitude.

"Herein is love," says the apostle; "not that we loved God, but that he loved us." "We love him, because he first loved us." How is the love of God to us a cause or reason for our loving him, which may, first of all, be brought to bear upon us, if it is not that it appeals to an innate principle of gratitude? "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." How but by arousing within us the inborn, though perhaps dormant feeling, gratitude, which will impel us to bow in humility before that bountiful Benefactor, against whom we have sinned, even while he was continually doing us good?

We see, then, that, in the earliest relations of life,—towards the earthly and the heavenly parent,—the first sentiment (unless fear be an ex-

ception) which is exhibited under appropriate circumstances, and which is relied upon to elicit other sentiments, is gratitude. If this sentiment is foreign, or not native, to the character of man; if it must be superadded, engrafted,—why is it looked for, and why is it exhibited, in the simplest and least educated states and stages of human existence? Why is it so often seen that kindness and favors will soften and subdue even the savage breast? Why do universal opinion and language brand the ungrateful child or man as a monster?

But I know nothing of metaphysics,—not even the terms,—and may be only exposing my ignorance by attempting this discussion. Yet this one thing I know, that, whether gratitude be innate or engrafted, it is one of the holiest, happiest, and most powerful sentiments of the soul, when developed and cultivated as it should be. If, as I believe, it be implanted in the nature of man at his creation, it none the less requires cultivation. Although it be a grace which adorns the more intelligent orders of animals, making them oftentimes more faithful friends of man than multitudes of his own race, still, to become what it is designed to be, it must be “born of the *spirit*,” it must form a chief ingredient in the spiritual character: first “that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual.” And the use which is made of it in all Scripture proves that it is looked upon by Him who “knoweth what is in man” as a most powerful lever to lift from the soul of man the burden of sin,—to arouse him to repentance, to duty, and to

life. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God," says the apostle, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

I have said that gratitude is one of the happiest as well as holiest sentiments of the human soul. A mere sense of obligation is often painful. The bestowment of benefits does not necessarily call forth gratitude, nor deserve it. A kind wish, a sympathizing look, is of infinitely more worth than gifts of gold without kindness. There are, too, some cold, proud hearts who feel the reception of any benefit from a fellow-man to be humiliating, and who would gladly be independent of even the gifts of God. Alas for such! They can never know the joy of the grateful heart. It is said that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and the words are quoted from one who gave infinite gifts; yet even he discovered such gratitude for the humble offering of a box of ointment, as to ordain, that, wheresoever his gospel should be preached in the whole world, the story of that loving act should be told. And it has been. It is more blessed to give than to receive; but next to the happiness of receiving the gratitude of others, is that of pouring out our own to the friend who has wished or done us good, and supremely to the one First Cause of all our blessings. Let us, then, not only indulge but cultivate the feeling of gratitude to all around us, who show us the spirit of kindness, who offer the humblest tokens of good-will. God, and man too, abhor the proud; and it is only the

bitterly proud, or the utterly depraved, who know not gratitude. But, above all, let the goodness of our heavenly Father, as it shines forth in the character of him "who was the fulness of the Godhead," command our highest, our supreme gratitude. Let us accustom our minds to much meditation upon his mercies, and dwell continually upon his goodness. This attribute of his character, more than any other, comes within the grasp of our capacities. The almighty power, the infinite wisdom, the glorious majesty of the Creator, may fill the mind with awe and reverence, perhaps with dread; we may adore and worship. But when he makes "all his goodness to pass before us," then it is that we feel our souls going out in love as well as adoration. Borne on the wings of gratitude, we can rise to the mercy-seat itself, and sound our golden harps in harmony with that of Gabriel.

"YE SHALL ASK IN MY NAME."

In the conversation of our Lord with his disciples, just before his death, he informs them of his speedy return to them at his resurrection, and endeavors to raise their depressed spirits by assurances, not only of his own love for them, but of the love of his Father. He assures them that because they have loved and believed in him, the Father himself loveth them. He tells them that thenceforth

they shall no longer come to him with their requests, but shall go directly to the Father ; and that whatever they ask of the Father as his disciples, in his name, or as those who have loved the Son, and been loved by him, the Father will give them. And he adds emphatically, " At that day ye shall ask in my name ; and I do not say unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you." Meaning, if we understand him aright, " Although I am, by my Father, appointed the medium of all communication between himself and you ; and, through me, all your petitions are to go up to him, and all blessings to be sent down to you ; yet it is not alone because of the love of the Father to me that he sends you these blessings. He himself loves you as his own children, because you have loved me, and believed his messages of mercy brought by me. Therefore, even leaving out of sight my intercessions, he is ready to bless you."

Truly might the disciples exclaim, " Lo ! now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb ;" for, in these blessed words, he had, as he promised just before to do, shown them " plainly of the Father." Here is clearly uttered that blessed truth which was so forcibly reiterated after his resurrection, " Behold, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

In all false religions of which we have ever heard, the supreme object of worship has ever been represented as a Being requiring to be propitiated ; never as one who, of his own free will, loved to bless his subjects ; but as being moved thereto by some

service or benefit or pleasure bestowed upon himself, antecedently to granting the benefits sought by his subjects. Was the benefit thus sought, the forgiveness of their sins? The costly sacrifice must be made to gratify the desires of the false deity, or the self-inflicted penance must be endured to satisfy his vengeance upon the offender. The evil of sin was its disobedience to the god, — the wrong it did him, or the affront to his dignity; not its effect upon the subject. Was the sin too great to be atoned for, or the benefit too great to be purchased, by any self-infliction, or any service which the petitioner could pay? The mediation of richer or mightier or more acceptable agents was sought, who, by lesser offerings to themselves, might be induced to interpose their surplus merits beyond their own need, in behalf of the humbler suppliants.

How different is the religion of the Bible! How different is Christianity! The INFINITE ONE, the Great Supreme, the God over all, is revealed as the "ONE LORD," beside whom there is none other; but revealed also from Genesis to John, only by manifestations of his goodness and love to the creatures he has made. "In the beginning," when he created, he also blessed. The first exhibition of any thing but love, the first expression of an approach to what men call his anger, is exhibited towards the adversary who had betrayed our first parents into that course which frustrated the happiness for which they were created, and rendered them wretched; and all subsequent history in the sacred volume is but the details of a course of mea-

tures to bring man back to happiness by bringing him back to his Father and his God. We find nothing which is designed to exalt the glory, the majesty, the power of the Deity alone,—no demand for worship and deference and obedience, as only to the great Supreme, only because he is such; but all is connected with his love and mercy and goodness towards those who are called to worship and obey. “I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” “I beseech thee,” said Moses, “show me thy glory.” The answer is, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee.” “I am the good shepherd,” says Jesus: “as the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep: therefore doth my Father love me.” And in the gorgeous descriptions of the adoration of the New Jerusalem, the burden of the unceasing song to the Lamb is, that he was slain for the redemption of the world, and has “redeemed us unto God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation.” Thus did the Father exalt the Son, because he had given himself for the salvation of his children of the human family.

But selections of passages from the Old or New Testament need not be made. The whole tenor of the Scriptures gives the unavoidable impression that it was not the Deity who was to be reconciled to the world,—not the love of God to man which was lost,—but that it was that love, ever the same, sending its messengers of mercy, “rising up early

and sending them," and, at last, sending his only-begotten and dearly-beloved Son into the world, to reconcile the world unto himself.

This beloved Son, for the work which he hath done and for the sufferings he was willing to endure in its discharge, — "him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." This is his glorious reward: he is made the medium of all spiritual blessings to God's children on earth. Every good and perfect gift that cometh down from the Father of lights cometh through him, — is to be sought through him; and the incense of gratitude is to ascend through him. The elder brother, the first-born of every creature, has laid down his life for the wandering and the lost; and by him shall every returning prodigal be presented to his Father, and through him shall come "repentance and the forgiveness of sins."

This is the understanding which I have of the office of Jesus as a Mediator, at least of that office so far as it can be explained to children, or be very clearly held by our own or common minds in general. I would never forget, in speaking of the Son of God, his own solemn words: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." I humbly seek to know the Father as the Son hath revealed him to me; and I know he hath revealed him as my Father, in all the senses in which I can understand the

paternal character, as well as his own. I feel sure that he has revealed him as being no less ready to pardon and save and bless, than is the Son, whom he sent to proclaim his mercy. And, however ignorant I may be of the full glories or mysteries of the Son's exalted nature, I feel sure that he never intended to veil what he came to reveal. He never meant that his own brightness should dim in our eyes the lustre of his Father's infinite perfections; or that the melting tenderness of his love should fill our souls, to the exclusion of that of "the Father who himself loveth us."

When, therefore, I come to God "through Jesus Christ," I mean as the words express. I do not come to the Son, and ask him to go to the Father for me; I go to his ineffable presence through the door which Christ has opened for me; I see him beyond the veil which Christ has drawn aside. When I ask in his name, I lay before the Father the petitions which I know he is ready to answer as is best for me, from his love to me, united with his love to that dear Son who never offended him; I come leaning upon the arm of the very messenger whom he hath sent to draw me to him, and plead the assurance of his readiness to hear me, sent through him whom he heareth always.

This is the way in which I use and understand the phrases in question. It may seem needless to express at such length that to which there will perhaps be no dissenting voice among us. When subjected to the test of discussion, we often find that our opinions agree upon points where we

have thought, and others have thought, that we differed widely. But the frequency of these supposed differences, and honest mistakes, should teach us one most important lesson in the office which we fill; namely, to be exceedingly careful, exceedingly watchful, that our vague use of language, if not the vague notions about truth in our own minds, does not mislead the young minds which we undertake to enlighten. We cannot be blind to the injurious effect of the extreme of the error to which we have been alluding, as it is seen in our brethren of the orthodox school, even in the modified forms in which the mediation of Christ is now taught by them. We cannot doubt, that to the common mind, under such teachings, the Father is robbed of his glory, and the Son is made to usurp the love which belongs supremely to him who so loved the world as to send his Son. And if we carefully examine our own minds and hearts upon this subject, can we not remember times when our gratitude and love for him who was sent was as a temporary cloud between us and him who was the Sender? Pardonable as the fault may be, in comparison with that coldness and hardness of heart which the united love of the Father and the Son cannot melt, yet it is a fault. We cannot go more against the will of our blessed Lord than to exalt him by forgetting the higher demands of his Father upon our love and gratitude. And moreover, and I would say it emphatically, we do our own souls grievous wrong, we deny ourselves the highest and most elevating joy, if we neglect to

use the privilege of coming, as we are invited, to the footstool of the Father's throne itself; of saying in all its fulness, as we are permitted, "Our Father who art in heaven."

IN TEACHING CHILDREN THAT JESUS IS A SAVIOUR, IN
WHAT LIGHT SHALL WE SO REPRESENT HIM ?

In the simplest, clearest, most direct light possible. Let no anxiety to throw a dazzling splendor about him, or to adorn his brow with a rainbow halo, induce us to suffer the cross-lights of mystery, or the mirrors of earthly glory, to confuse the eyes of our pupils. Tell them of Him who was the beloved Son of God,—who dwelt with his Father in glory before the world was made, and whom God loved as an only son. Tell them how much like God Jesus was; so like him in goodness and holiness, in love and mercy, that the Bible calls him the exact representation, the express image, of the Father. Tell them, that as Jesus thus dwelt in heaven, in joy and happiness with his Father, he saw how mankind had become wicked, degraded, and polluted with all evil; how they had lost the knowledge of the true God, and almost all of them worshipped idols; and even the nation of the Jews, whom God had favored with special revelations of himself, had corrupted his laws, and obeyed only those of form and ceremony; while the rich and powerful oppressed the poor, and cruelty and violence filled the

earth. Tell them that this pure and holy and happy being, seeing such wretchedness and guilt in the world, and knowing the mercy and compassion of his Father towards this fallen race, was willing to come down to earth, to lay aside his glory, to leave the joys of heaven, to take the human form and to become a man, that thus he might come among men, and preach to them the truth about God, reveal to them how merciful and gracious he was, make known to them his laws, and, by his preaching and his own holy life and pure example, show them how they must live to please God. This he was willing to do, although he knew, from his perfect knowledge of what mankind were, that he should be received by a great portion of them with scorn and unbelief; should be treated with cruelty, and finally be put to death in torture and ignominy. Yet nothing of this could deter him from his mission of mercy. Tell them, that God, knowing this willingness of his well-beloved Son, did send him into the world; giving him power to work miracles, by which to prove his divine mission; to offer pardon to the penitent sinner; to invite all the poor, the sorrowful, and the heavy-laden to come and put their trust in him; to teach mankind that they were all brethren, and should therefore love and help, instead of oppressing and destroying, one another; and, above all, to reveal the glad truth of another and an immortal life, in joy unspeakable in heaven, to all who believe his message and obey his words. Tell him that thus God sent his Son, and that thus Jesus came; that he thus preached

the good news — the gospel — to mankind; that multitudes believed and obeyed him; but that the greater part of the nation to whom he first came rejected him, and threatened him, and treated him with all cruelty, to make him desist from his good works; but that he chose to persevere, preferring rather to die than to leave his blessed work unfinished; that, finally, he was cruelly put to death, and thus died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Tell them, that, before he suffered, he appointed good and holy men to preach the gospel after him, and gave them power, even as his Father had given him power, to work miracles, and to establish his religion in the world; that from the grave God raised up Jesus to the glory which he had with him at the beginning; and that there he ever sitteth at the right hand of God, and is still carrying on the work by means of the help he gives to his disciples and ministers here on earth, and will carry it on, until God shall crown his labors with full success, the earth is redeemed from all sin and evil, and there are no more wars and fightings, or injustice and oppression, in the world. Tell children these glorious yet simple truths; then prove them, and enlarge on them, as you can from the Holy Book; and even an infant will be able to comprehend in what light Jesus may be called a Saviour, the Redeemer of the world, the dearly-beloved Son of God, the fulness of God in the body of man. With these simple views, drawn out as they should be, and as they can be placed before his young and tender affections, if such affections have not been

blunted by a coarse education, he can be made so to know and love the blessed One, as to feel that "his blood was indeed shed for us," when he consented to die rather than forsake us; that it was even at the sacrifice of his precious life that mankind were redeemed and brought back to the knowledge of the true God; and that it is through his mediation we receive the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and life everlasting.

THE EDUCATION OF FAITH AND REVERENCE IN CHILDHOOD.

THE most important lesson that can be taught to child or man is, that, in our relation to God, all are children;—that in ignorance the highest human intellect is lower, when compared with him, than is the infant compared with his earthly parent. In proportion as this truth is perceived, and coupled with the conviction that God is all-good and all-powerful, as well as all-wise,—in such proportion may it be expected that a life of implicit obedience will be commenced, and a soul-sustaining, peace-giving trust enjoyed.

"Unless ye become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." This text is no more true in regard to the purity, humility, and docility of little children, than it is in regard to that innate sense of ignorance, and of consequent dependence, which is given them as

their surest safeguard and defence ; leading them to cling to their natural protectors, and, by its very charm of irresistible appeal, binding those protectors to them.

The earliest bitter lesson of a child's opening experience is, that its first-known and trusted protectors cannot guard it from danger and suffering beyond a certain and very limited point ; and the bitterest of all pangs to the parent's heart (save those of guilt) is felt when the extended arms, the beseeching look, and the supplicating cry of a beloved child must be met only with a feeling of utter helplessness. Happy the parent who can then turn his own eye of faith, and direct that of his suffering child, to that higher, better Father who can send deliverance, who alone seeth the end from the beginning, and ever "doeth all things well."

This lesson of faith in God none will say can be too early taught ; but, in teaching it, we of course must confess our own ignorance, or rather the narrow boundaries of our knowledge. We must not seek to "avoid things we cannot explain." Seek as we may, we cannot conceal our ignorance. A child soon begins to ask questions which an angel cannot answer. Nothing can be more dangerous for our influence than to attempt equivocation, or to assume the show of a wisdom which we do not possess. The paltry pretence will soon be found out, and the child's confidence in what we do know will be for ever forfeited. Rather should we seize the first opportunity to confess our own weakness and fallibility beyond certain limits, and to begin

the lesson of faith in Him who alone has infinite wisdom and infinite power. To impress this faith, we can show that the wisdom which we have comes from him, the Source of all; that he gives what is sufficient for our present circumstances; but that, compared with Him who alone is infinite, the wisest and the best among men must ever hold the relation of children; that much as the wisdom and experience of his elders can teach the pupil, and much as the accumulated wisdom and experience of past ages has taught man, still all increase of human wisdom is

“ But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance :”

but that there is a Being “who knoweth all things, and can do all things;” and that *that* Being is our heavenly Father.

It is the lesson of human ignorance that should be inculcated. For want of believing this, how many noble souls and mighty minds have made shipwreck! The pride of human wisdom, the presumption of human will! “I will know; I will not trust. I can comprehend, and I will see, or I will not believe!” Let us save our children from this. Every study of science, of natural history, of physiology, of all recorded experience, and of every-day experience, should be brought to prove, and most gloriously do they all prove, that all we know of God shows him to be good, supremely good, as well as wise; that no one purpose of ill has been discovered; and that every new opening

of knowledge strengthens, not weakens, this blessed assurance. From the simple and plain, — from the revealed and clear, — from the sun-illuminated heights of knowledge already attained, — let us point to the dark clouds beyond, so mysterious now, as only temporary curtains which are hung before more light, which, in due time, shall also be unveiled to our strengthening vision. The simple heart of childhood can thus be early taught the lesson of faith; that “what it knows not now, it shall know hereafter,” and know that all is good. Alas! what wretchedness has there been in the world for the want of this anchor of early childhood! What joy might take the place of dark despair, if men would only listen to the soul-comforting words of Jesus, “Be not afraid; only believe”!

“IN WHAT WAY CAN WE BEST CULTIVATE A TRUE
LOVE FOR CHRIST?”

By striving to become like him; by putting on his spirit. But, to do this, we must know him: to know him, we must study him as he is portrayed for us in the Gospels. As fast as we learn to know him, we must strive to imitate him. Thus knowledge and practice will go together and help each other. Every step we take in conforming our characters to his, will open to us more clearly, or give us the capacity to discern more clearly, the

beauty of that character, and the way in which we may "put on the Lord Jesus."

The study of the character of our Lord, as it is portrayed in the Gospels, is the first step, then, in cultivating a true love for him. It is upon one method of pursuing this study that I wish to say a few words,—perhaps I should rather say, upon one branch of that study; and that is, the acquainting ourselves with him in a way which will bring him, first of all, into our affections. I doubt if this is a common mode of beginning to study his character, even in this day of great improvement in the study of religious truth. The last thing I would do is to lessen, by one iota, the reverence with which we ought to approach either the majesty of heaven itself, or him in whom dwelt "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." But I have sometimes thought that we are in danger of looking, as it were, too high for Christ. He was given to be a mediator between God and man; and by no means an unimportant portion of this office is to bring us "unto the Father," by enabling us to look upon the Father in him. It is hard, very hard, to conceive of the great God as thinking of, caring for, loving, such as we are. We admit it as a revealed truth; we are thankful for it. But, after all, we fail to realize it if we contemplate it alone. It is only from the face of Jesus Christ that we are ever able to imbibe such a sense of the Father's condescending love, as enables us to rejoice in believing. But, if we set Jesus so much in the dazzling fulness of the Father that we lose his distinct and separate image, we fail of

obtaining the very highest advantage of his mediatorial office. We suffer from that very confusion, — those indefinite and misty conceptions, to which we think some of our fellow-Christians of another creed peculiarly exposed. We lose both the Father and the Son. We do not make them one so much as we continually make the one overshadow and conceal the other.

What we want first of all, it seems to me, is to learn Jesus Christ as he showed himself to his earliest disciples. We know that they were slow to understand his highest character. Though they looked on him as a messenger from heaven, they had little conception of the full glories of his nature or his mission; yet they learned to love him as a man, as their teacher, as the kind, compassionate, benevolent friend of their race. They were at no loss to comprehend the first meaning of the commission which he opened at Nazareth, — “He hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” They had been with him where he dwelt. They had brought one another to him, saying, as each was drawn towards him by his gracious words, “We have found the Messiah.” Andrew tells Simon; Philip seeks Nathanael. They find themselves already known to him, already loved by him; and their hearts go out to meet his. They walk with him amid the thronging crowds, and see him

every day carrying out to the letter his high and benevolent commission; preaching words of comfort to the broken-hearted, lifting up the bowed down. They behold with wonder, but with love and joy and gratitude more than wonder, his miracles of mercy; they witness the tears of the grateful mother of Nain; they hear the beseeching cry of the father of the maniac child, and the quick rebuke of the terrible disease; they hear his call to the blind Bartimeus,—they bid the darkened man “be of good cheer, for he calleth thee,” and they know that his healing is sure; they behold the lovely frame of the dead maiden reanimated, as the simple words fall from his parting lips, “*Talitha cumi.*” The famishing multitude are fed by miraculous hospitality, while his own wants are forgotten; and he gives himself not so much as “time to eat bread,” while he administers spiritual nourishment to those who seek it. They follow him to the tomb of his own friend, from whose sick couch he had with sore self-denial kept away, that “the glory of God” might be made manifest; they hear the more than half-reproaches of the sorrowing sisters, Martha and her sister Mary, whom Jesus so tenderly loved, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother had not died;” they behold the tears which those reproaches wring from his eyes, accustomed as he was to be misconceived, misunderstood; they see the dead Lazarus, as he obeys the majestic voice which had but just before trembled with the troubled spirit, and comes forth from his cave of death. They have seen, they have heard

all this, and more that cannot be told for multitude, of acts of love and goodness and compassion unequalled; while, in every hour of retirement, words of counsel, instruction, and friendship, for themselves especially, flow from his lips. And can they but love him? Shall we follow them and their Master yet farther? Shall we bring before us that upper chamber, and its weeping, trembling inmates; and listen to the calm, clear voice that bids them let not their hearts be troubled; for, as he had loved his own, he loved them unto the end? Shall we walk with the sorrowing pair to Emmaus, and listen, while for the first time the full glories of the heavenly mission are opened to their understandings, and they learn to see how it became him whom they had so tenderly loved, whose supposed loss they now so bitterly lamented, — how it became Christ to “have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory”?

If we can and do thus follow and listen to the blessed Jesus; if we do thus place ourselves by the side of his earliest disciples, and learn to love him as they did, from beholding him as he walked on earth; then, it seems to me, shall we be prepared to stand with them upon the ascension-mount, and, even as we behold the heavens opened, and the full glory of him whom we have loved as the man of sorrows bursts upon our minds, shall we be able to love him still. Then, though he is parted from us, and sitteth on the right hand of God, we still can love him; for he is yet the friend, the elder brother, whom seeing we loved; who, before

the bright cloud received him out of our bodily sight, lifted up his hands and blessed us.

These are some hints of the way in which, it seems to me, we must learn to love our Saviour, before we can be able to love him in those higher views of his nature and character which will come to us as we are able to receive them. And to learn thus to love him must be, I think, the surest way to prepare and induce our souls to receive him fully in all his character and offices, — as our Prophet, Priest, and King.

But let me, before I close, say one word upon a danger which seems to me to result from the language which we sometimes hear, when the Saviour is held up to our love, gratitude, and obedience. We must never forget, that the mission of the Saviour is to bring us to God; that he is the Mediator between God and man, — not, in any possible shadow of meaning, a substitute. We revolt at such an idea when stated in words; yet is there not danger that something like this effect may be produced on some minds, when the love of the Saviour is strongly dwelt upon, without connecting it with the love of Him who sent him? When the law of Christ, his commandments, his example (not the law of God, which he obeyed as our example), are held up as the sole or chief motive and guide for the Christian; — when we are urged to duties, because Christ enjoined them or practised them, rather than because they are required by the law of God as revealed by Jesus, and as obeyed by him; and when we hear the love of Christ as exhibited

in his life of sorrows, his sufferings, and his death, urged with the most moving appeals, may we not be in danger of forgetting the apostolic language, "Herein is love, that God so loved us that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"?

I repeat, Jesus came to lead us to the Father; to teach and enable us to love the Father, by showing us the perfections of the Eternal through the medium of the Son, upon which we can look and yet live. Far would Jesus be from thinking himself honored, by having one offering stop at his shrine; and far was it from any purpose of his to shut off the affections from the Father, and suffer only the worship of the intellect to go up to the eternal throne, while our love centred or rested on the Messenger from that throne. As we best honor the Son when we honor the Father, so we best show our love for the Son when we love the Father, his and ours, "with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength."

WHAT EFFECT SHOULD HIS CONNECTION WITH THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL HAVE ON THE MIND OF THE TEACHER?

THE first effect, one would think, must be to arouse the inquiry, "Who am I that I should take it upon me to teach others?" "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" was the reproving question of Jesus to Nicodemus, when that man of the Pharisees started back in amaze-

ment at the first doctrine propounded by the "Teacher come from God." "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" is the ready question which, we know, arises in the minds of others who behold us taking our places in the Sunday-school. Should it not be the first one which I put to myself, not only when debating whether I shall assume the office, but every time I cross the threshold of that humble school-room?

Understandest thou what thou teachest? I turn to the first question in one of our catechisms, "What are the first principles of religion, both natural and revealed?" Let me pause for a moment, and see if I can make an answer to this first question in my own mind. Or do I comprehend more justly than did Nicodemus what the great Teacher's meaning was in saying, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"? Have I felt the deep unworthiness which I contracted even in the early stages of my life, which renders it needful for me, before I can be a full and true disciple of Christ, to experience a change comparable only with that of one who enters upon a new life? Have I experienced the reality of religion, of my relations and obligations to God and to my fellow-men, so truly, that I can speak to others with a depth of sincerity and earnestness which alone can give power to my words?

A habit of self-examination, then, would seem to be the first effect which his connection with the Sunday-school should produce upon the teacher; and a self-scrutiny which will be followed by an

amendment of what is wrong, and an improvement in what is good, in his character.

Another effect which may be expected is, that it should render more clear to my intellect the great basis upon which my religious obligations rest. I ought to understand better, for having gone over them with others, the reasons for obeying the call of God. Do I find this to be the case with my mind? Do these reasons, these obligations, appear stronger to me than they formerly did? Do I find myself urging them with more zeal from my own increasing convictions? And, again, have my affections become more engaged in religious things than they were before I undertook to urge children to give their young hearts to God?

Another effect should be to make me more watchful of my example and of all my influence. It is vain to tell me, that I am not more bound to be virtuous, and to show that my virtue is founded upon religious principle; that I am not more bound to avoid even the appearance of evil, because I am a Sunday-school teacher, than if I were not. I would almost say, that, if these obligations upon me before were infinite, they are increased now. If God made me in any sense my brother's keeper, I have now made myself so; and alas for me if I trifle with either obligation!

A very important effect may and ought to be to preserve in the young teacher all the freshness of his youthful sympathies, — to prevent that too ready forgetfulness of the feelings of childhood which so often comes with the newer engrossments

of advancing youth. To be a successful or a happy teacher, one must, indeed, "put away childish things;" yet not so but that with a child he may become a child; as Paul says, "With the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak." We must not forget our own childish days; their trials, their difficulties, their sorrows; full as great, full as hard to the strength of those days, as ours to our present strength. The cold, unsympathizing, impatient teacher will teach his own ill-temper much faster than he will the spirit of Jesus. The intercourse with childhood may be a most happy instrument of maintaining in ourselves that spirit of little children, without which we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

There is one effect which may be produced in the Sunday-school teacher, which it may not be amiss to mention, that it may be guarded against more watchfully. It is not an unfrequent case that the preaching of morality is substituted for its practice. The word of exhortation is far more easy to give than the more impressive lesson of the life. And, while that word is familiar to our lips, we may be in danger of suffering our praise of virtue to go for our practice of it. But the rewards of a good life are not given to its flatterer: we cannot win heaven by admiring its glories.

There is one more effect, and a most happy and cheering one, for which I may hope, if I have been humble and truthful in seeking and maintaining this connection; and that is, the consciousness that I have the smile of him who pointed out as

the best answer to his thrice-repeated question, "Lovest thou me?" "Feed my lambs." I may and do often most painfully feel the inadequateness of my powers, and my frequent failures to exert the powers I have. I mourn again and again, that in my example I come so far short of my verbal teachings; and, indeed, that "the things which I allow not I do." Yet there are moments, — there are sabbaths, — when, after a season of prayerful, earnest, affectionate effort, there comes home to me a bright beam of assurance, that I have for at least once been faithful; ay, and perhaps, for at least once, successful. Would that this effect of our connection with the Sunday-school may be more and more justly and frequently experienced by us all!

THE USE OF MANUALS IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

It will not be denied, that the great prevalence of associated action at the present day has a tendency to interrupt individual action, and to weaken the sense of personal responsibility which ought to exist in every one's mind. United power should be sought only in order to give more efficiency to individual efforts, and not to diminish those efforts. Yet, in moral enterprises at least, we too often find that the person who would lay out his whole might to lift a weight which rests upon him alone, will relax his muscles when another

takes hold with him, until he finds the maximum which this other is able or willing to bear.

But, however justly these tendencies may be urged as an objection to many associations, both for moral and worldly purposes, they can hardly be brought against our association. Although we are many united in one cause, it is the almost peculiar advantage of our institution, that each one of us has a part, and a distinct part, of duty to perform. None are exempt from labor, and each must perform or neglect his part upon his own responsibility. He can shift his burden upon no one, and no one can assume it for him. In rendering in our account, no chairman or president can sign the document in behalf of the whole; no one can sleep until his year or nay is called on the passage of the report.

Perhaps, however, this assertion may need qualification in regard to one, and that an important part, of our duties. Although each teacher has his class, — which is his alone, and for which he must give account for himself, and not another, — yet we have duties to one another as associates, which we may think it more possible, and which we may feel more willing, to decline, or shift off, or deny our ability to perform. We are bound by our very association to be helpers of one another; not helpers, in this case, by bearing one another's appropriate burdens, but by mutually instructing, exciting, encouraging, one another to bear each his own.

It is to perform a portion of this duty that we are now assembled; and, however humbly we may

be inclined to think of our individual ability, we are bound to have the wish to do our part, and faithfully to examine ourselves to see if it is the sense of inability alone, or an infusion of indolence, or peradventure of that sentiment, bearing the closest kindred to pride, — an unwillingness to do a little if we cannot do much.

Were this communication to be read in some places, it would be the best service to endeavor to suppress a forwardness which would fain do, not a part, but all of the good. But, among us, the opposite is certainly the error; we are not sufficiently forward; and some cause must exist which prevents even the ordinary excitements of sympathy, when we come together expressly for mutual conference. What is this cause? How can it be removed? Let him that can answer, or even conjecture, feel it to be his duty to speak.

And now, lest I come under my own sentence of reproach, let me strive to say a word upon the important subject proposed for this evening's discussion, — "the Proper Use of Manuals in Sunday-school Classes."

When the subject was proposed, it was expected and hoped, that one of us would take a more elaborate view of it, in all its parts, than it is in my power, at least now, to do. But, as I understand that its discussion is to be in some measure left to verbal or partial communications, I will ask leave to confine myself to one or two points.

It has become very common in some quarters to decry the use of these mechanical tools of instruc-

tion, as they are called. We hear of making the works of nature — the broad sky, the green earth, the deep forest, the wide landscape, and the flower-sprinkled meadows — the leaves, and the only leaves, of our class-books; and some would also make the sunny fields, the towering mountains, the open air, our only school-rooms. Beautiful, unequalled, unrivalled pictures are these; illustrations prepared by an artist of skill, far, far beyond what can be expected in the humble letter-press which they may adorn. But he can know little of the minds of children who will not admit, that even these pictures must be explained, and their lessons impressed, by words, simple, repeated, varied, and adapted, in ways as numerous as the classes of minds to whom those lessons, themselves the same, are addressed.

But the sight of printed lessons, of vulgar, everyday school-books, is repugnant to the feelings of these our good friends. They savor too much of the weekly, hard-learned task; the wearisome drudgery of the arithmetic, the grammar, the Greek, and Latin of the six days' toil. And there is force in the objection. But let us, for mercy's sake, in the sabbath-school, if nowhere else, avoid the mistake of rejecting what is good in itself, because it is, or can be, abused. Let us remember, and shudder, that there are those about us who would repudiate the sabbath, because it is said to be an excuse for not keeping every day sacred; who would put down the preaching of the word, because it is sometimes preached by the unholy; who would destroy

the church, because its professors are sometimes hypocrites.

It will be remarked, however, that the rational portion of those who advocate the abolishing of manuals do it, not on the supposition that the instructions which some of them contain must not be given, but because they would have these instructions all come from the teacher and from the living voice. They will generally admit, that, as helps to the teacher, manuals may be used; but contend that, even then, they had better be concealed from the children; and the instructions which they contain, having been extracted and concocted in the teacher's mind, be by him dealt out to his pupils.

Here, it seems to me, the danger, which may be incident to the use of manuals, is perceived; but the right way to avoid it is not pointed out. The real danger is, that the teacher, having placed the manual in the child's hands, may trust to the printed lesson to convey the instruction which it is his own duty to give, and which no printed lesson can give; like him who set the child his first lesson in reading, by marking the six first letters in the alphabet to be learned from the book. He converts himself into an automaton, more than he does the child into a parrot. Indeed he is more of an automaton than the celebrated chess-player; for that machine could correct an error, although it was not laid down in the books, which this lesson-hearing teacher cannot. The danger of manuals is not that the children will trust to them, but that the teacher will. Yet, to avoid this danger, it is not

necessary that manuals should be taken away from either teacher or pupil. Let both be alike careful to study and acquire the appointed lesson, but most especially the teacher. It is of far more importance, in Sunday-school lessons at least, that the teacher study and prepare himself for school, than that the pupils should. If the teacher is prepared, although every child has neglected to look at his book, the class will never go away without a lesson.

To hope to do without manuals, a teacher must be conscious of more power, and of more abundant resources in himself, than many can possess; and, if the teacher is all that any one can wish to be, he will soon find, that, without some intermediate link of connection for the pupils' minds between one season of instruction and another, without some preparatory exercise for the pupils, they will come to his class with less fitness and willingness to receive instruction, be it never so eloquently, kindly, or simply administered. The experience of public lecturers illustrates this. A course of lectures, however excellent in every respect, will do little good to an audience who give no personal and private study to the subject on which they treat; and the lectures themselves will be heard with infinitely less interest by such an audience than by those who make the subject one of private study. Such study and preparation are essential to give the pupil a sense of personal interest in the lesson. We all need to have something to do in it ourselves, to make us care much about any matter that is going on.

But probably among us it is not needful to labor to prove the necessity of manuals. Our error, it is to be feared, lies more on the other side,—that of making them of too much importance. Let me briefly state my views of the place they should occupy, and the proper mode of using them. The first class of manuals—namely, elementary catechisms and hymns—are designed to fix in the memory a series of elementary truths and sentiments which will perpetually recur in all subsequent stages of progress. With regard to these, when they are thus simple and rudimental, it may be permitted to make them at first, in a great degree, exercises of mere memory. But, while this is going on, it should never be the solitary exercise. It is essential, for their best use, that the words of the lesson be perfectly committed; but, at the same time, every session of the class should have its brief oral lesson from the teacher. So also with some manuals of a more advanced class, such as those which teach any of the scientific illustrations of religious truth, or that excellent summary of the Christian evidences by Bishop Porteus, which is now much in use in our higher classes,—the memory must be brought into active exercise, so far as to impress upon it indelibly the distinct propositions which are to be made out in the subsequent course of argument or illustration. The distinct proposition being stated, as in Porteus, and fully committed to memory, will ever after serve as a key-note to bring to the mind the whole train of proof by which it is supported.

But it is to manuals for scriptural instruction that the greatest caution should be applied, as there is most danger of their abuse. With regard to these, it seems to me that they should be used as the merest hooks to hang the lessons upon. I will speak only of those we have in use in our school, — Allen's Questions. These are the only books of questions which we can use ; and they are as good as any I have ever seen on the same plan. But it is a lamentable proof, to my mind, of the little interest which Sunday-schools have even yet acquired in the high places of religious instruction, that these questions and this plan have been suffered to occupy the place they do for a score of years ; while the means of secular instruction are calling out the most powerful efforts of the highest as well as best minds in the community, and a constant course of improvement in school-manuals and modes of teaching has been going on. One great defect in these books is the mixing-up of too many things in the same lesson, and the occasional introduction of matters irrelevant to the main point of the lesson. Simplicity, or, rather, singleness of object, should always characterize lessons for children.

In giving scriptural instruction, the Bible itself should be considered the class-book ; and the question-book, a mere help to its study. But, as these questions are framed, and as they are used by most teachers, children look upon " Allen " as the lesson, and the Bible as the humble auxiliary, and that only in part, to his book.

In using either part of Allen, it seems to me that

the passage of Scripture at the head of the section, or the chief one, should be given as the lesson ; then let the " Questions " be consulted as helping and leading to conversation about it. Let not the teacher feel bound to ask every question set down (for, indeed, some of them the author alone, if even he, can answer) ; and let him try to find other questions more important. But let him ask enough of those in the book to cause the child to feel that his study has not been useless ; and, if the teacher omits to ask any question, let the pupil be encouraged to ask it, or to speak of it, if he wishes.

Under the circumstances of our mixed classes, it is usually found impossible to keep all the pupils in the same lesson ; and, consequently, a majority of the class are sitting idle a great part of the time. This evil, I think, might be avoided in a far greater measure than it is, if teachers would be less slaves to manuals, and would study the lessons with a view to supplying their own deficiencies. It is far, very far, less necessary than is usually thought, to have the pupils in a Sunday-school class classified according to age or attainments. Let a class of six— which would, in the strict order of such arrangement, be placed in three or even six divisions with three different lessons or grades of lessons— have assigned to them the first lesson in Allen's first part, or a portion of it, at discretion : let them all read, or have read to them, the passage of Scripture pointed out, and look over the questions, and each one bring as many answers as he or she can easily acquire. Now, the teacher is supposed to have

studied it himself, and comes to the class. Is there any difficulty in finding matter and questions in that lesson adapted to each pupil and each grade of mind there? And, while the elder or more intelligent pupil will be a helper to the younger, the younger will be no less a helper to the elder, through his own simple questions or answers, or the needful ones of the teacher. Often, very often, will the teacher find that, in striving to enlighten even the youngest, he will be giving the best and most needed instructions to the oldest; and *vice versa*.

Another evil, great as it is, may be also much lessened; that is, the difficulty arising from the non-attendance of scholars. Instead of carrying on every pupil through every lesson, and thus keeping all separate, the lesson of the day should be the only one attended to; and let the absentee take such part in it as he is able, extemporaneously; and, as I have hinted, if the teacher be properly prepared, the pupil can be abundantly interested in the lesson, or in some part of it, even if he hears it, for the first time, in school.

I am persuaded, that, for a great portion of the scholars who attend our school, this mode, desultory though it may seem, will be by far the most advantageous. The more constant, regular pupils or classes will, or may still have, all the advantages of regular, systematic instruction; and much more so because they will not be perpetually kept back by the need of devoting time exclusively to the negligent or the unpunctual.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER'S PREPARATION.

WHEN this sabbath-school was first established, one who was solicited to take an active part in its management stated, as an objection to his being so employed, that he was wholly unacquainted with school-keeping, as he had not been within the walls of a school-room since he was there as a pupil. Our beloved friend Haven, who was present, replied that what was stated as an objection was in fact a recommendation. "You will come to us," said he, "fresh, and unshackled by habits and forms. We want in a sabbath-school no more of the school than is necessary to preserve order, — no technics, no prim formalities, no master in his terrors, or scholar trembling before him."

The principle alluded to in this remark is one of vital importance in all religious instruction. If God is love, all that speaks of him should bear the impress of love. His very terrors should be terrors only to those who do not, will not, love him; who cannot love him, because they love sin. There is terror in God no further than it is gendered in the habits of the sinner; and, when evil habits and tastes are abolished, God may be seen as he is, — and he is love. But the principal intention of our departed friend was to make the impression, that, in a school like this, it was of more importance to excite good feelings, draw out the affections,

and show religion in a form to attract the heart, than to train children to recite set lessons, and to exhibit the show of religious knowledge, without imbibing its influence. And upon this plan he always practised in his own class. He used text-books, and gave lessons; but he used them only so far as to set the minds of his pupils at work for themselves; and he gave out information no faster than it was desired. As food will not nourish the body, if taken without a relish; and will injure it, if taken with repugnance; so will instruction, merely poured upon the mind, be useless or injurious.

There is danger of becoming formal in every thing which we are called upon to perform stately. Perhaps no mind can so sustain itself as to enter into the spirit of its employment as regularly as it is called upon to discharge its forms. But, the danger being known, it may be much lessened. Let the Sunday-school teacher never go to his class, any more than the faithful clergyman to his pulpit, without previous preparation; and there will be little lassitude, or formality, or cold indifference. There will be none in the teacher: there will not long or often be much in the pupil. But what is this preparation? It need not be here mentioned, that humble application to the Fountain of wisdom and of all good influences must be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last of all efforts for such preparation. It need not be mentioned in this circle, that such reading and examination of the subjects brought forward as will give ability to

answer proper questions is absolutely essential. But in what way besides these, is it needful for a teacher to prepare himself for his weekly duties at the Sunday-school?

The presenting of this question to the mind of each teacher is the object of this communication. Let each for himself answer the question, and more will be done than could be effected by the thoughts of an individual.

Let that peaceful evening which precedes the Christian sabbath, and let the morning hours of that holy day, be consecrated to the preparation for the Sunday-school, and we shall find our own improvement going on more rapidly than in any other way in which we could spend those hours. Let it be a subject of meditation, "What can I do to-day for my class? What topics will the lessons bring up? How can they be best turned into practical use? What bearing will they have upon the character of this or that scholar? and how shall I bring them home to him? What turn shall I give to the conversation to-day? What book or other object can I carry to school with me to excite and interest my scholars upon something which may conduce to the great end of all my efforts? Am I or my pupils getting to think that the recitation of lessons is the only object for which we meet? If so, I will have no lessons. I will throw up all form. I will be the only student out of school-hours."

OUGHT WE, AS TEACHERS, TO APPEAL TO MOTIVES THAT WE FEEL TO BE LOW, IN ORDER TO AROUSE THE ATTENTION OF THE PUPIL?

No. But we should carefully consider the nature of the motives, and of the character upon which they are intended to operate, before we decide that the motives or the character should be termed "low."

There is more meaning in the language of the apostle than is sometimes imagined: "There is a natural, and there is a spiritual. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." There is also a common-sense meaning to the language of our Saviour, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" which is too often overlooked in searching for a mystical, theological meaning.

Man is born an animal. "First that which is natural." For a longer or a shorter period, according to parentage and circumstances at and subsequent to his birth, he remains an animal, swayed by animal passions, influenced by appeals to animal feelings; discovering, according to the same circumstances of parentage and position in life, more or less intelligence, docility, or brutality. It is generally believed, that the germ of spiritual life is in him, — is in every being born in human shape. But no experiment or observation has authorized

the belief, that, left to himself, insulated from his kind or from beings above himself, this animal would ever become more than animal; that this "natural" would ever become "spiritual." But, placed within the influences of spiritual life, the germ is warmed into vitality; the man becomes "a living soul." This is the second birth.

Perhaps a further and stronger distinction should here be pointed out between the intellectual and the spiritual, as well as between the animal and the spiritual existence; but for our present purpose we need not be more explicit, especially as it is very hard to say what degree, if any, of mere intellectual development marks the line between man and other animals.

Now, will not every one admit, that the animal nature of youth must be in some measure tamed, his mere animal impulses brought under some restraint, before even intellectual instruction can be imparted? And must not a degree of intellectual culture be attained before the first elements of spiritual knowledge can be conveyed? What, then, we might term "low motives," when addressed to the fully or partially developed spiritual being, or even to the mere intellectual being, would not merit that designation if applied to the animal. And this is true, with corresponding qualifications, as to all degrees and stages of spiritual growth. As teachers we have to do with every class. Without attention to the distinction now alluded to, we shall be in danger of an error similar to that of some good people, who think that to

translate the Bible, and send it to the benighted heathen, is all that is needful to make them Christians, without the preceding or accompanying steps of civilization, even in its first stages.

Is there not danger that some teachers of the present day (not confining the remark to Sunday-schools) are, by endeavoring to avoid addressing low motives, failing to reach low enough for the mass of their hearers, readers, or pupils? Do not some act as if they thought it beneath their dignity to labor to call into life the spiritual germ, or to subdue and control the animal nature, by motives so adapted to its capacities, that, if I may thus speak, the spiritual may have a chance to be reached? Just as some, who may be very excellent teachers of men, would make very poor Sunday-school teachers, and still worse teachers of our primary schools, — but for which they would have very few men to teach.

Perhaps we are all too ready to catch the tune we hear hummed in our ears so much of late, about man's innate greatness, sufficiency, dignity, and the like; and to strive to be wiser than our divine Teacher, who "knew what was in man," and in his teachings hesitated not to appeal to the "recompense of reward," and of punishment too, in such figures and such modes of exhibition as could reach the understandings of his hearers, at whatsoever stage of mental or spiritual development he found them; — wiser also than Him who made man, and placed him in that rank in the scale of being which he saw fit, setting before him the march of eter-

nal progress, but adapting his modes of education to every step of that progress; presenting inducements to urge him onward, such as he could appreciate, from the possession of "a land flowing with milk and honey," and the promise that "his days should be long in the land," to the "better country" and the "eternal life" brought to light in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let us not strive to be wise above what is written for our instruction, but ever hold up the highest motives that can be appreciated by our pupils. Let us take care, that, however simple and humble the motive, it be pure from sin; but, when thus pure, let us call nothing "low," — "nothing common or unclean," whereby we may win souls unto Christ.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT REQUISITES FOR A SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER?

I MAY be permitted to confine myself to one of these requisites, — and the one which I consider of paramount, of indispensable importance, — namely, Love.

It must be love which moves the true-hearted teacher to undertake his work. First, love to God, producing the desire to please him, which can be effected in no surer way than by doing good to his creatures, — love to God, which excites the ardent desire to make every one else love him. Secondly, love to all mankind as the creatures of God, and as

our brethren in Christ, who died for all, and would not that any should be lost, but that all should hear and live;—and especially love to children; not only to those who may emphatically be called the “lambs of the flock,” upon whose bright and beautiful features the newly-stamped image of their Creator shines in yet unsullied lustre; but to those also upon whom the contamination of example has begun its corroding work, and even to those in whom the disease of sin has left but little trace of the child, except the stature. The true-hearted teacher will love even such for what they may be, and for what they will be if his labors and prayers are crowned with the success for which he has a right to hope. In such children as these last, love shudders to behold the early ruin, and resolves, God helping, that Satan shall not have such an easy triumph.

And, when love has led the teacher to his post, he will find that the same holy sentiment is the best and safest guide to him in filling that post. He may not doubt this, when he sees at his knee the cherub-face of innocence sparkling with delight as it drinks in the waters of life, and rewarding him who holds them to its lips with its own love. But when the vacant eye of neglected ignorance, the sinister leer of precocious depravity, or the repulsive stare of miseducated assurance, shrinks and withers up his heart, he will exclaim, “Can I love such as these?” Yes, teacher! your Master came, not to call the righteous; he came, not to redeem those who were not lost, or those “of whom was the

kingdom of heaven" already. He came, it is true, to save such from falling, as temptations should thicken around them on their entrance into this world of their education : but "he came to call sinners to repentance;" to redeem from the very jaws of the lion the prey which he had seized; to lift from the very mire of pollution the degraded soul, and to cause light to shine in the midst of darkness. And such, in your infinitely humbler measure indeed,—but such must be your work; and, in so far as you have a spark of the love which was in him, this work, notwithstanding its difficulties and discouragements, will be your delight.

But, to be effectual, love, like patience, must "have its perfect work." It must be present at every step of the teacher's course. Whatever plans he adopts or whatever means he uses for the management of his class, love must not only be in the heart, but it must be in the mind and thoughts at every moment. So soon as fatigue, impatience, anger, or disappointment overcomes the instant, active operation of love; so soon as we feel the impulses of resentment shrinking up the heart,—that moment our usefulness is at an end for the time. Our sole safety is to stop short, until we find our only sure pilot at the helm again.

I appeal to the experience of the oldest teacher to say if he can count up half as many failures over which he laments, from all other causes, as he can ascribe to his neglect of the principle of love,—if he remembers any of his short-comings, over which he mourns so deeply as his deficiency in an ever-

wakeful, ever-active love. I ask him, too, if he remembers any success, any joy of his office, which he did not owe chiefly to the power of this great helper. If so, then surely love is the most important requisite in a Sunday-school teacher.

WHEN THE MIND IS AWAKENED TO A SENSE OF ITS UNWORTHINESS, AND PREPARED TO SEEK RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION, IS IT A PROPER TIME TO BECOME A COMMUNICANT ?

TAKING this question as it stands above, I should give a decided answer in the affirmative, yet with certain necessary qualifications.

When the mind is awakened, and prepared to seek religious instruction, then is it the time to approach the table of our Lord, and meekly to sit at his feet, listening to the instructions of him who alone is able to guide the inquirer into all truth.

But when may it be said that the mind is awakened ? Not when some sudden shock has disturbed its slumber, and rendered what was before quiet as the sleep of the tomb, restless and uneasy ; not when some undefined phantoms of terror flit before its closed eyelids, and cause the tossings of unrest, without arousing consciousness and the self-determining will. The mind in this state no more manifests a desire for religious instruction, and gives no more evidence of any wish therefor, than does the smothered cry of the victim of night-

more express the desire to be awakened. The watchful friend who witnesses the distress knows that, to remove it, the sufferer must be awakened; and he strives to do this by making his friendly voice heard by the slumberer.

So with the mind,—the soul. When, in the providence of God, some cause breaks in upon the deathly slumber, which so often broods upon it even amid the highest religious privileges, it becomes restless and uneasy. Its usual quiet is gone. It starts, and turns this way and that; but the pillow of thoughtlessness can no longer be enjoyed. It would fain arouse itself to be rid of its suffering, yet clings helplessly to its unconsciousness; until the same merciful Providence, the same blessed Spirit, sends some kind hand to complete the work, and call back the slumberer to himself.

It is not, then, it appears to me, when the first convictions of sin are upon the mind; when it first painfully feels that all is wrong, but how or why it is as yet hardly aware,—it is not then that one is prepared to become a communicant at the table of the Lord; for he knows not whom or what he seeks there. He is not to rush thither as to some talismanic charm, which is to cure a felt but unknown disease. But when not only the lethargic sleep, but its succeeding stage of bewildering anxiety, has passed off; when the mind is indeed thoroughly awakened to a sense of its own wants; when the soul finds out its false position, its degraded state, and, filled with penitential sorrow, earnestly and sincerely seeks for religious guid-

ance, resolving, by the help of God, to lead a new life, — then, it seems to me, is the time for it to fix about itself every barrier against the breaking in of its enemy; to seek every support to its weakness, and every appointed way of gaining instruction; then is it to lay hold on every means of acquiring religious habits, and of confirming them as they are acquired; and among these means stands foremost that which is alluded to in the question, — saying not only in the secrecy of the heart or the closet, but before men and in the eye of day, “From henceforth we will serve the Lord.”

HAVE SUNDAY-SCHOOLS HAD THE EFFECT TO DIMINISH DOMESTIC RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION?

It will probably make some difference in our conclusions, whether we consider this question as relating to quantity or to quality; and, indeed, what the term “religious instruction” shall be understood to embrace. As to its application, it seems proper in the present discussion to take it in its broadest sense, and to call that religious instruction which is honestly meant to be such. Otherwise we may be involved in an interminable labyrinth, in striving to settle how much of what goes under that name in Sunday-schools themselves is in truth deserving of the name.

If, in considering the question of mere quantity, we measure the time occupied in the family in-

struction, we should probably find that it has been diminished ; simply because, even could he have the time, a wise parent would not confine his child to so long a course of instruction, knowing that he was to go from his side to the school for another hour.

But it is not in the way of quibbling or indirection that we wish to examine this great question. We wish to know if the effect of these schools has been to diminish the sense of parental responsibility, — to increase parental unfaithfulness. For if this has been, or is likely to be, their effect, it must be proved that these schools will furnish better means of religious instruction to the young than it is possible to obtain from parental influences, or they ought to be abandoned. This might be made a question. It is not perfectly certain, that, in the present state of the mass of society, the young would not be better off to be left to Sunday-schools than to their parents, if either must be withdrawn ; so far, at least, as sabbath-day influence is concerned ; taking into the view not only the wilful neglect of parental duty, but also the ignorance of that duty, the inability to discharge it, or both.

But to confine ourselves to the points necessary to the present investigation of the question in a single light. It is made an objection to these schools by some, and given as a reason for their refusing to encourage them, that they not only usurp the place which domestic instruction ought to occupy, but prevent that place from being filled as it would be, if it were not for them.

Facts alone can fully settle the question; and if it should be found that the opinion of those who have had the best opportunity of observing facts has been opposed to the apprehension expressed, it should go far to vindicate the school, and to obtain for it the countenance and assistance of those who plead this objection.

I have conversed, with direct reference to this subject, with great numbers of teachers, and with many pastors who are deeply interested in the Sunday-school, especially with teachers who are the most faithful in visiting the families of their pupils, and thus have the best means of judging of the probabilities of the case; and I have found, I think, — with one exception, though that was one for which I feel high respect, — have found all of them of opinion that the weight of facts was against the fear that the schools interfered injuriously with domestic instruction; — that, undoubtedly, there were too many cases where parents were willing to shift off their sense of responsibility, by sending their children to school, and for a time tried to do so; yet that in all cases of this sort, where parental instruction would have been given if the school had not existed, or where conscience would have been aroused, and caused it to be given where it had been neglected, — in all cases where such a hope might be indulged, it was not long that the false excuse of the school was permitted to supply its place. I have conversed, too, with many religious and conscientious parents, who have the most constantly availed themselves of the school, and from

them have in no case derived the impression that they conceived themselves in the least absolved from their responsibility or from their duty to oversee and assist in the religious instruction of their children, though in some cases they rejoiced to feel that their sabbath-day's labor was abridged in its details, and more efficiently performed by the teacher to whom they entrusted their children.

So much, then, for testimony. And, when we reflect upon the probabilities of the case, it seems as if a strong array of opposing facts must be brought before it can be believed that Sunday-schools are the means of lessening parental faithfulness.

When we consider the effect of merely sending their children to these schools in bringing home to the minds of parents a sense of the importance of religious instruction; the necessity there is of preparing at home for the lessons of the school, in which parental assistance is required and called out, — if by no higher motive, — by the natural desire to have their children stand well with their teachers and companions; the intercourse of faithful teachers with the parents, in which their duty of co-operation will be constantly urged upon the parent's mind and conscience; when we reflect, too, how much is done by the teachings of the school to produce method, clearness, and discretion in home-teaching, in place of the blended vagueness and technicality of former times; — it seems impossible, that, where there exists any disposition to parental faithfulness, such disposition should not be in-

creased; and where there is none previously, it must, in many instances, be produced. And who that has been long conversant with the history of these schools does not know of delightful instances where the child's school-born piety has brought the same blessed spirit into the parent's heart? Is it not probable that more than one young Samuel of these humble temples has received a message to an Eli in his own home?

I think it must be admitted upon reflection, that, as regards parents sensible of their religious obligations to their children, the school can offer no permanent salvo to their consciences in the neglect of those obligations. And even less does it seem possible that religious parents can for a moment be willing to surrender into other hands the privilege of opening the word of life to their own children, or that they can content themselves by merely leading them to the door of a Sunday-school. They may, and doubtless will, rejoice to avail themselves of such an auxiliary; but only as an auxiliary — as subordinate. Ask that Christian mother if she shudders at the thought of assigning to another the maternal duties which relate to the body of her little one, and yet can let the nutriment of its immortal spirit come from a stranger-fountain. Ask that religious mother if she will resign the blissful moments, when, her little ones gathered at her knees, the infant-prayer is first taught to flow from her child's lips, and its cherub eye to glisten at the Scripture-story; ask her if she will yield up to another that sacred right, which

God has given to her alone, of implanting the first sentiment of love to God and to Jesus which her child receives.

But there are reflections which this subject brings up to us, as teachers in the Sunday-school, which are of deep and moving interest. Whatever there be of parental faithfulness and ability,—and would to Heaven we could believe there were a thousand-fold more!—yet, in many cases, in most of our classes, we must feel that we stand in the place of parents to the young beings who come to us; to the children not only of the unfaithful and negligent parent, but of the humble and the ignorant, who not only cannot give systematic and full instruction, but have not the eloquence of heart or tongue to place in an attractive light the blessed truths of our Saviour's teachings. How many, even of the more favored of our pupils, only hear of religion at home, through the stern voice of command,—of the "letter which killeth;" while the "spirit" is seldom seen or felt by them or around them! Are we sufficiently sensible of the high—I had almost said the awful—station which we occupy? Do we feel that it is often in our power to be as a "father to the fatherless" in a sense more important than to give our bread to the orphan? Do we think enough, do we think constantly, of what we may do for our pupils? Does the sight of our classes call up, as it should, the unfailing aspiration for divine help? Does our sabbath-night's pillow witness the searching question, Have I been faithful to my class this day?

Say not, "They will not hear:" say not, "I am slow of tongue; I cannot teach." Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; whether we satisfy ourselves or not,—oh, let us strive, let us not be weary! God it is who must "give the increase."

WHAT IS THE MOST EASILY BESETTING SIN OF CHILDHOOD?

WITHOUT stopping to make any very nice distinctions as to the degree of moral turpitude which attaches to what are commonly called the sins of childhood, I will use the common phrase, and say that I regard thoughtlessness as the sin which is most common and most dangerous to children. It is the most usual source of all their other sins. It is the often invincible barrier against all approaches of useful instruction. It is the snare which entraps them unawares, and places them in ten thousand temptations and dangers, against which those of maturer age, without half their purity of feeling, are armed.

How is the Sunday-school teacher to assist them to overcome this fault? His opportunities are few, and far between, of checking, reminding, admonishing his pupil. Let these opportunities, therefore, be much used in warring against this one fault. Let it be the theme of conversation, Sunday after Sunday. Let him set it up as a mark to aim

his friendly battery against, week after week. Let it be so often a subject of conversation, that the pupil will have it occur to his mind as a likely subject of the next Sunday's talk with his teacher. And thus, by degrees, will it come to be a tendency against which he will be watchful; and, every time he finds himself plunging on in his giddy way, he will have the beacon of his teacher's advice and warnings beam up to arrest him.

But, it may be said, you will weary, disgust, or irritate your pupil by thus harping upon one fault, and one so venial as this. So you will, unless you take care to manage the matter skilfully. Suppose you have a boy in your class who is greatly addicted to this fault, — who is so giddy, so overflowing with animal spirits, that he cannot restrain the tide even in moments of the most solemn services in school or at church. Do not frown and harshly check him. Sympathize with him. If you see that he is suddenly betrayed into the fault, take him kindly by your side; relieve him from the immediate temptation; and, when it is past, allude not directly to the fault. Enter into a cheerful conversation with him; lead him on by degrees to seriousness, by the gradually increasing solemnity of your conversation, — still without a direct reproof or admonition at that time. The following Sunday, take that boy next to you; ask him to commence the business of the school soberly, and to give you the pleasure of seeing no disorderly or irreverent conduct in the class. The next sabbath, have a direct talk with him upon the fault of his character.

Tell him how well you know its nature, and how difficult you know it to be to overcome it. Tell him its dangers, and end by asking him to try for that week to think of what you have said, and to tell you on the succeeding Sunday if he does not find it true. Follow this by another sabbath's kind, cheerful, pleasant conversation of the same sort; get the boy to tell you some of his experiences at home, at school, and at play, during the previous week; and see how many instances you can point out to him, where he has got into trouble, or has lost advantages by this easily besetting sin of his character. Get him, then, to promise to watch for one week, and see if this sin does not lead him into almost all his dangers and evils; and to promise the next week, for the sake of experiment, from curiosity, to resist the sin every time it tempts him, and to tell you how well he succeeds. Now here are six or seven Sundays in which thoughtlessness has been the theme of a part of your conversation with the class together, or with this boy separately, as you deem most expedient; and I ask, if, with a little skill and patience on your part, it need be tedious, disgusting, or irritating.

But you will say, "This may do with a good-natured and intelligent boy; but with such wilful, stubborn, malicious, as well as thoughtless scholars as I have, it would all be vain, and only make me ridiculous in their eyes." Do not be too hasty in deciding that a child has all these full-grown sins in his character. I have often (may I be forgiven!) made the same decision, and in righteous indigna-

tion, as I thought, poured forth my solemn denunciations against the culprit, — when I have found, by the swelling throat, the heaving chest, and at length the overflowing eye, that I had mistaken my boy ; that under his rough and homely exterior were hidden better feelings. And I have too often had to feel my own tears fall for the unkindness and harshness which I had shown, — for the evil passions into which I had been betrayed, under the disguise of what I had called proper indignation at the faults of an incorrigible child, — incorrigible only, in many or most cases, from want of proper treatment at home, at his day-school, or from me.

I will not now specify any other faults to which children are most liable. But may it not be found, that selfishness, another most conspicuous sin of childhood, and some others, are often overrated by teachers, — are often thought too badly of, so to speak ; that is, are deemed more deeply rooted and more malignant than they really are, in the child whom we wish to improve ; that we too readily despair ; that we are not skilful enough in our management of them ?

My fellow-teachers may smile at this minuteness of detail, and, as they may deem it, whimsical course of thought ; but, if it leads one of us, as I hope it may lead me, more carefully to study the real character of each one of our pupils, and more diligently to devise ways and means for aiding them to overcome or amend their faults, — if it leads one of us to think more seriously and

wisely of our duties, the purpose of the question, as I suppose, and certainly the purpose of this partial answer, will be effected.

GOVERNMENT OF THE THOUGHTS.

THE soldier who is in his enemy's country does not complain that he cannot throw off his armor, sheathe his sword, and lie quietly down to rest. The general, who is engaged in a campaign, expects to set his daily and nightly sentinels, to keep up his constant patrols, to review his troops day by day, to examine unceasingly his defences. He expects to find some of his sentinels occasionally unfaithful in their watch, and his walls and battlements in need of strengthening. He expects an active enemy to be continually renewing and varying his assaults. He therefore trusts nothing without his own unwearied oversight. He leaves no post unguarded, in the belief that it is strong enough to be left alone. He is not surprised to find his firmest battlements sometimes undermined, and in need of rebuilding. He looks for his reward, not in present ease and security, but in the reflection, when his campaign is ended, that his watchfulness and vigor, while the war continued, carried him safely through, and made him conqueror at last.

So the Christian. He must not complain, that, after ever so diligent and faithful a use of his

weapons and his shield at one time, he is again and again compelled to use them. He must not murmur that his enemies sleep not themselves, nor suffer him to sleep. He has no armor offered him in which he may encase himself, and expect safety, unless he endeavors to parry every blow which is aimed at him. He has no walled town given him in which he may be secure, unless the watchmen upon the walls and towers afford timely notice of an enemy's approach.

Let not my fellow-teacher, then, complain that, after diligent self-examination and earnest prayer, he finds himself still exposed to the insidious as well as open attacks of his enemies; that worldly cares and employments force themselves into the very ranks of his holy things. Let him not think, "I have prayed against these, and therefore am secure;" but let him say, on the instant of discovering their intrusion, "I will now pray against them." Let him not say, "I have diligently examined myself, and therefore I will enjoy my security;" for, while he thus speaks, he opens the secret portal which admits his foes. "Pray without ceasing, and watch without ceasing," must be our motto of remembrance. We are enlisted for the war, and the war is for life. Does this thought dishearten us? How would our souls rejoice, were it said to us, "Be faithful, be diligent, for one, for five, for ten years more; and then all your fears shall cease; your battle shall be ended, and victory shall be yours"! Christian brother, what are years, be their number what they may, compared with eternity?

Would you rejoice to have your warfare limited to years? — it may be already limited to days. To-day, this hour, this moment, “be thou faithful;” and you know not but that victory will be won, for this very hour may be the last of your warfare. “Be thou faithful unto death” is the promise, “and He will give you a crown of life.” The present moment is all you have to care for: take care of that, and the crown is yours.

Renew, then, — whenever and as oft as you find worldly thoughts interfering with your religious duties, — renew your “earnest prayer;” and though this be necessary even to “seventy times seven” you will at length hear the answer, “Great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Earthly thoughts shall no more disturb your peace; heavenly things shall fill your soul.

THE END.

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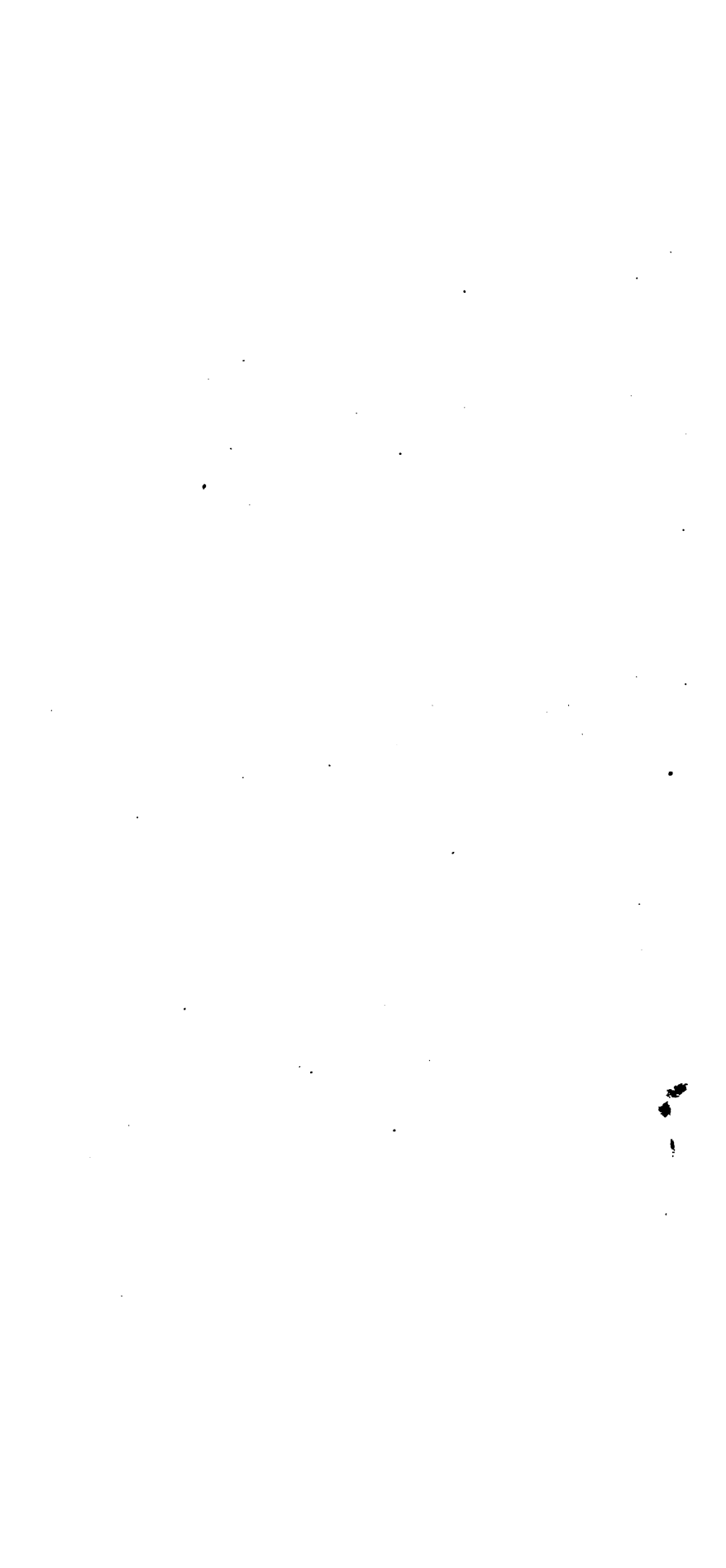
Page 12, Line 10, for 1821 read 1822.
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